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DANTE'S
DIVINE COMEDY.



THE PARADISE.

“ Lassù fia caro il rivederci, amico —
Tosto si vieta qui.” Se ciò scrivesti
Pur nell' altrui parole, e mi facesti
Legger, chinando quel volto pudico,
(Che tal non arricchì, tal fa mendico,)
Se mai cost pietosa mi parvesti,
Or quegli studj non ti sian molesti,
Ond' lo rimembro il mio piacer antico.
Quinci da bella Speme fien lattati
I pensier miei, mercè la gran virtute
De' primi affetti, e quasi concreati,
Che c' addolciavan la mutua salute
Ne' giorni, d' ogn' ambascia allontanati,
Della puerizia, e della gioventute.

DANTE'S DIVINE COMEDY.



THE PARADISE:

TRANSLATED IN THE ORIGINAL TERNARY RHYME

BY

C. B. CAYLEY, B.A.

"Fecisti nos ad Te, et inquietum est cor nostrum donec
in Te requiescat." — *Conf. S. AUGUSTINI.*

"Jura Monarchiæ cecini." — *DANTIS Epitaphium.*

"Let us not to the marriage of true minds
Admit impediments." — *SHAKESPEARE'S Sonnets.*

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DANTE'S DIVINE COMEDY.

THE PARADISE.

CANTO I.

THE Glory of the Mover of all Being
Pervades the Universe, one region more,
Another less, the effulgence of it seeing ;
The heaven, that holds His light in fullest store,
I entered, and saw things, which never he, 5
Who thence returns, had power to speak, or lore,
Because our intellect puts out to sea
So far, when her Desire she draweth nigh,
That memory her attendant cannot be.

But all that from the sacred realm in my 10

Remembrance I could store, in every guise,
Shall now the matter of my song supply.

O good Apollo, for this last emprise

Render me such a vessel of thy might,
As to the longed-for laurel may suffice. 15

Till now hath sped me one Parnassian height,

But on my last arena now beneath
The double safeguard, I must needs alight.

Do thou into my bosom come, and breathe,

As when thou drewest Marsyas of old 20
Out of his body's perishable sheath.

Puissance divine, if I on thee take hold,

Till but the copy, still imprest on me
From yon divinest kingdom, I unfold,

Look, I shall come to thy beloved tree, 25

And crown me with its leaf, whereunto thou
And what I write of shall my vouchers be.

So rarely, Father, is it gathered now,

By Kesar or by bard, for triumphing,
The fault and shame of human wills, I trow,) 30

That this Peneian leaf, if it can bring

Some man to thirst for it, may fairly breed
New joyance for the joyous Delphian king.

Great fire may after little spark succeed ;

Belike with louder voices those behind 35

May pray, till Kyrrha shall respond indeed.

By many an outlet riseth on mankind

The Lantern of the World, but from the side
Which doth four Circles in three Crosses bind,

With better light, with better stars allied, 40

He sallies, and the mundane wax more near
His bent, is printed thence, and qualified.

Now sent he morning there, and evening here,

From such a quarter, making white welnigh
All this, and swart the following hemisphere ; 45

When, turning to my left, did I descry

Beatris gazing towards the sun remain,
Where eagle never so enfix'd his eye.

And as the second ray is wont again

To sally from the first, and up to rise, 50

Like pilgrim, who returneth home full fain,

So from her act, infused across mine eyes
 Into my phantasy, mine own became,
And toward the sun I looked, beyond our guise.
Much is permitted there, which none must aim 55
 Here to achieve, in virtue of the place,
Which God did for mankind's own dwelling frame.
Nor long I bore it, nor so short a space,
 But that, like iron from the furnace brought,
From all its disk I saw it sparks to chase. 60
All on a sudden day to day methought
 Seemed added, like as though the Omnipotent
To grace the world another sun had wrought.
Beatris rested with her eyes intent
 Upon those orbs eterne, and I my view 65
Took from above, and toward her aspect bent.
Within my nature from her glance I grew,
 As Glaucus, after he that herb had ta'en,
Which made him one among the Sea-Gods' crew.
Transhumanizing cannot be made plain 70
 Per Verba, but suffice the simile
To those who shall by grace experience gain.

If I was only, as thou mad'st me be,

Transformed, O Love, which heaven's whirl createst,
Thou know'st, who by thy light upliftedst me, 75
When the revolvement, thou perpetuatest,

Desired One, attentive made me through
The harmony, thou blend'st and alternatest.
Then heaven was so enkindled in my view

By the sun's fire, that lake by confluence 80
Of rain or stream so full yet never grew.

The newness of the sound, and light intense,

Such strong desire enkindled in my breast,
That I thereof had ne'er a keener sense.

And she, to whom my soul was manifest 85

As to myself, its turmoil to allay,
Had oped her mouth ere yet by me address.

"Thou makest thyself dull," she 'gan to say,

"By thy own false conceit whence thou believest
Less than thou wouldst, if this were ta'en away. 90

Thou art no more on Earth as thou conceivest,

But lightning never from its home went out,
So swift as thou, who thy return achievest."

Now, though divested of my former doubt

By the brief wordies that she smiled, far more 95

Was I by one, that followed, wrapt about.

I answered, "I was satisfied before

After great marvel, but now marvel I,
Beyond such bodies light how I can soar."

She, having uttered then a tender sigh, 100

With such a look as toward a raving son

A mother turneth, on me turned her eye;

And "All things in Creation," she begun,

"Have in themselves Degree, which makes the Form
That sets with God the World in Unison. 105

High Creatures herein see the footprints worn

Tow'rd that Eternal Worth, which is the end
Whereto directed is the aforesaid norm.

Now in this order, which I speak of, tend

All beings unto their first cause, more near 110

Or less, as each his diverse fate shall send.

By this means unto diverse ports they steer

Through the great Sea of Being, having all
Dividual instincts, guiding their career.

This toward the moon is wont the fire to call, 115

That rules the motions of the mortal heart,

This knits and binds in one the terrene ball.

Nor only Creatures born beyond the Chart

Of Understanding, from this bow are chased,

But who in Love and Reason have a part. 120

That Providence, by whom this plan was traced,

Keeps with his light that heaven still at peace,

In which revolveth that, which hath more haste.

And now, as toward our place decreed, to this

End are we sped, by virtue of the bow, 125

Which aimeth all it shoots at bourne of bliss.

Full true it is, that as the shape may go

Awry from that which was designed by art,

Because the matter to respond is slow,

So from this course the Creature may depart 130

At times, for power to his free will is given,

To bend, thus launchèd, toward some other part.

And so we see the flame to shoot from heaven,

Whene'er the first impulsions to it lent

Divert it, by false pleasure earthwards driven. 135

Thou shouldst not wonder more at our ascent,

 If well I judge, than men a stream admire,
Down to the plain from lofty mountain sent.

This were indeed a marvel, to require

 That, freed from obstacle, thou shouldst remain,
Like matter moveless in the living fire." 141
Herewith she fixed her face on heaven again.

CANTO II.

O you, that have pursued in tiny boats,
Desirous but of hearkening, in the train
Of this my ship, that singeth as she floats;
Turn back, and seek out your own coast again—
Trust not yourselves upon the deep, or you 5
Losing my track, bewildered might remain.
No keel has ploughed the path that I pursue,
Minerva blows, Apollo pilots me,
And Muses nine set Arctos in my view.
Ye other few, that while the time was free, 10
Your necks have toward that bread of angels bent,
Which feeds man here, though filled he cannot be,
Well may you trust on this grand element
Your vessels, keeping by my furrow fast,
Before the waters have across it blent. 15

Those wights renownèd, who to Colchos past,

Did never glory, as shall you, not even

When they saw Jason hold the plough at last.

Our thirst perpetual, and at birth-hour given,

After the Deiformal realm, welnigh 20

As fast impelled us, as you see yon heaven.

I looked on Beatris, and she on high ;

And haply in the time a shaft may rest,

And from the bowstring loose itself, and fly,

I stood, where by a wondrous sight imprest, 25

Mine eyes were drawn away, and thereat she

To whom my act must needs be manifest,

Turning, as blithe as beautiful, toward me,

Said " Gratefully direct to God thy mind,

For blent with his first planet now are we." 30

Methought, that in a cloud we were confined,

Compact and solid, burnishèd and bright,

Like adamant, when by the sun beshined.

This everlasting pearl received us quite

In through itself, as water doth receive 35

A gliding and unbroken beam of light.

Was I a body? and here may none conceive,
That two extensions into one may press,
As, if mass enter mass, we must believe;
Then should we burn with greater eagerness, 40
To see the substance, wherein doth appear,
How could with God's our Nature coalesce.
There shall be seen, what Faith accepteth here,
Not demonstrated, nay but like the first
Truth we believe, which of itself is clear. 45
"Dear Lady," I began, "as deeply pierced
As can be, with Devotion, thank I Him,
Who from me hath the mortal coil disperst.
But tell me now, what are those figures dim
Upon this body, which on earth below 50
Make some to fable, Cain appears therein?"
Then smiling, "And if man's opinion go
Astray," she answered, "often, wheresoever
The key of sense unlocketh not, I trow
The darts of wonder now should prick thee never, 55
For as thou wilt perceive, beyond the sense
Your reason flies with feeble-winged endeavour.

But what opinion drawest thou from hence?"

I said, "The noted variegation here
Is caused, I think, by bodies rare and dense." 60

And she, "Thy judgement surely shall appear

With error much beset, if to the train
Of reasons I oppose thou lendest ear.

The orb, that seven includeth, shows you plain
Lights many, which in magnitude and kind 65
A different semblance notably maintain.

If rare and dense were all the Cause assigned,

One only virtue would be less and more
And equally with all and each combined.

Now different virtues must be gone-before 70

By formal principles, and these would be,
Excepting one, by thy account no more.

And farther, if the brown, discust by thee,

Were caused by rareness, either must we deem
This planet throughout in the like degree 75

Of matter sterile, or as gross and lean

Make up the members, sundry pages so
Must in this lunar volume intervene.

Suppose the former true ; this might ye know

In the sun's occultation, where the light, 80

As through some other medium rare, would show.

This doth it not, and therefore must we cite

The next surmise to court, which if I do

Prove false, thy judgement is confuted quite.

If then the rareness pass not wholly through, 85

There needs must be at length some limit, where

Its opposite shall bar the way thereto :

The extrinsic ray must be reflected there,

As mirror, that with secret lead is lined,

Reflects all colors, which its objects bear. 90

Now wilt thou say, the ray appears begrimed

At such a place, above each other part,

From being there reflected more behind.

Experiment shall this objection thwart,

If thou shalt any time consult her, who 95

Is feeder of the fountains of your art.

Thou shalt three mirrors take, and from thee two

Remove by equal lengths, and let the last,

Far back between the others, front thy view

Turning to which, let thou a lantern, fast 100
 Behind thee kindled, make all three to gleam,
And to thyself return from all three cast.
All-be the farther image will not seem
 Of equal magnitude, yet on thy gaze
It shall no doubt an equal brightness beam. 105
Now, as the onlook of the warmer rays
 From surfaces of underlying snow
Their former cold and color disarrays—
Thy intellect, conditioned even so,
 I will with such a living light impregn, 110
As on thy nerve shall tremulously glow.
Amidst the heaven of the divine Serene
 Revolves an element, whereof the might
Controls the substance of all things therein.
The neighboring heaven, so populous with light, 115
 This essence deals to natures multiplied,
From it distinct, and having in't their site.
The sequent orbs, by modes diversified,
 Amongst their operations and their seeds,
The several virtues, they partake, divide. 120

Each several organ of the world proceeds,

As thou beholdest, thus from grade to grade,
That from above it shares, below it breeds.

Observe now well, the way that I invade

Across this ford the truth of thy desires, 125
That after thou may'st learn alone to wade.

The powers and motions of the sacred gyres

Must breathe of their blest Maker, as the care
O' th' smith the hammer's workmanship inspires.
And yonder heaven, which many lights make fair, 130

From the deep mind, that its revolving sways,
Its stamp and likeness must receive and share.

And as the soul, which in your concrete sways,

By many members, for that end endued,
Itself in various faculties displays, 135
So that Intelligence its efflux good

Among the Stars divides and multiplies,
Itself revolving on its unitude.

The diverse virtue diversely allies

Itself to that rich form, in which it glows, 140
Where, like the life in you, itself it ties.

Out of the blissful nature, whence it flows,

The mingled virtue in the form is bright,

As gladness in the life-rich eye-beam shows.

From this proceedeth what twixt light and light 145

Is different, and not from dense and rare ;

This doth, as formal principle, excite,

According to its grace, the swart and fair.

CANTO III.

THE Sun, that whilom fired with love my breast,
Had, proving and disproving thus, the sweet
Aspect of goodly Truth made manifest ;
And I, to make avouch of my complete
And sure conviction, had so raised my head 5
As for delivery of my words was meet :
When something new appeared, which riveted
So fast, through wonder, on itself my view,
That from remembrance my confession fled. 9
As through transparent and smooth glass, or through
Some undisturbed expanse of waters bright,
(Yet not so deep as makes them downward blue,)
Return the pictured objects of our sight
So faintly, that the gleam is not more weak
Of pearl in midst of maiden temples white, 15

So saw I many a brightness fain to speak,

Which made me fall in quite a different error
From that which passion'd for the stream the Greek;
For these I deemed reflections of a mirror,

Which made me on the sight mine eyes incline, 20
That whence they came I might perceive the nearer ;
And farther saw I nought, and so to mine

Own sweet conductress back I turned them, while
She beaming kindled from her sacred eyne.

"Nay, marvel not," she said, "if I do smile 25

To see how still thou durst not plant thy foot
Upon the truth — from fancies puerile ;
But back thou turnest yet, and hast no fruit ;

Those, whom thou seest, are very spirits, here
Exiled, for vows which deeds have failed to suit. 30
But speak to them, and trust what thou shalt hear,

For yon true Spirit, who makes them all content,
Their steps allows not from himself to veer."

Then turned I to the shade, who chiefly bent

On speaking with me seemed, and said, like one 35
That welnigh with too much desire's outspent,

“O well-created soul, which in the Sun
Of life eternal dost that sweet partake,
Which, not partook, is understood by none ;
Thou wilt be highly gracious, if thou make 40
Me with thy name acquainted, and your lot.”
Then promptly, and with beaming eyes, she spake ;
“Our Charity, O my brother, shutteth not
Its gate on just desires, else would it lean
On Him no more, who all his Court with what 45
He is, would liken ; I on earth have been
A Sister plighted, and if thou regard
Me carefully, much beauty shall not screen
My sameness, but thou’lt recognize Piccarde,
Who, placed among these others here, am blest 50
I’ th’ sphere, which doth his orbit most retard.
Our loves, which are enkindled by no zest,
Except the Holy Spirit’s pleasaunce, here
Have gladness by the rank in which we rest.
And this our state, which does on earth appear 55
So grand, is given us purely for neglect
Of vows, to which we did not fast adhere.”

I said, "In every marvellous aspect

Of yours does something so celestial glow,
As changeth you from that we recollect. 60

And therefore in remembering was I slow,

But now thy speech affordeth such a clue
That more vernacular thy features grow.

But tell me, ye that here are blest, if you

No greater exaltation now desire, 65
To dearer make yourselves, or more to view ? "

She smiled not long with all her blissful quire,

Then answered me anon, as joyous-blest
'As tho' she burned in Love's supremest fire.

" Our wills, O brother mine, are set at rest 70

By power of Charity, which makes us will,
For nought else thirsting, only things possess.

If we should crave to be exalted still

More highly, then would not our wills agree
With His, who granteth us the place we fill ; 75
Which in these orbs impossible must be,

If all to live in Charity are bound,
And if its Nature thou dost rightly see.

For 'tis of that blest thing the very ground,
That in the will of God we govern ours, 80
Which from the twain doth one sole will compound.
So that as we live here from bowers to bowers
Distributed, the realm doth each one please,
Pleasing that King, who makes his own will ours.
In his good pleasure we have each his peace ; 85
This is the mainsea, whereto all things bear
That he creates, and Nature's whole increase."
Now plain it grew to me, how everywhere
In heaven is Paradise, though the Chiefest Weal
His grace not equally distributes there. 90
But like as sated by one food we feel,
And still can relish for another find,
And crave, while thanks we render for the meal ;
So now I strove with look and word combined,
That she might let me know the web, whereon 95
She, working, left the unfinished reel behind.
"Pure life," she said, "and passing merits throne
In higher heaven a maid, whom others make
Their pattern, as the stole and veil they don,

Therein till hour of death to sleep and wake 100

With one dear Lord, who every vow in gree,
That Charity formeth to his will, doth take.
To follow whom, did I in girlhood flee

The world, and did her hallowed garb endue,
And promised one amongst her school to be. 105
Men, more accustomed ill than well to do,

Rent me by force from that dear cell's repose;
My God, he knows, what life I since went through.
This splendour eke, who on my right hand shows

Herself to thee, and who with all the sheen, 110
That is to this our sphere appointed, glows —
Conceiveth of herself my tale, hath been

Like me a plighted Sister, and hath given
By force up from her brow the sacred screen.
But since that from the Cloister she was riven 115

Against her will, against all use and right,
She from the heart's veil never hath been driven.
Lo! that of great Constantia is the light;

It is from her the second Swabian gale
Begot the third and last successive might." 120

So said she, then began, " Hail Mary, Hail "

To sing, and singing vanished from her throng,
As heavy objects under watery veil.

Mine eyes, which so far followed her along,

As might be, when I lost her out of view, 125
Turned to the landmark of desire more strong,
And set themselves on Beatris anew ;

But she gave lightning in my onlook so,
That baffled many moments I withdrew,
And hence in asking I was made more slow. 130

CANTO IV.

'TwiXT meats alike removed, alike inviting

Two ways, free Man would die of hunger sheer,
Before he could the one conclude on biting ;
So too would stand a Lamb in equal fear

Between two furious ravening Wolves, and so 5
Would stand a hound midway betwixt two deer.

If therefore I was mute, who to and fro

Was pusht with doubts, to that, which must have
been,

My conscience neither praise nor blame doth owe.

I held my peace, but my desire was seen 10

So painted on my features, that less well
Would speech have shown my supplication keen.

Then Beatris did like as Daniel,

Who Nabuchodonosor freed from ire,
By which he had been made unjustly fell. 15

She said, "I plainly see, how thy desire

Pulls thee two ways at once, and hence thy care,
Stifling itself, doth outwards not suspire.

Thou arguest, if good will remaineth there,

What reason makes another's violence 20

My measure of deserving to impair.

Another cause of doubt thou drawest hence,

That spirits each to his own star to fall
Seem here, as after Plato's inference.

These are the questions, in thy will which all 25

Alike are poised, and therefore do I mean
To answer that the first which hath most gall.

No seraph, that in God is deepest seen,

Nor Samuel, nor Moses, no, nor John,
(Take which thou wilt,) I say, nor Mary Queen, 30
Possess in any a different heaven their throne

From yonder spirits, whom thy sight hath lost
Just now, nor more, nor fewer years live on ;

But all make beautiful the yondermost

Orbit, of sweet life diversely possest, 35
Through feeling, more or less, th' eternal Ghost.

That here thou saw'st them, doth not manifest

That unto them this dwelling is assigned,
But marks the lowest grade of Heavenly Blest.

So must one give instruction to your mind, 40

Because from Sense alone it apprehends
That, which to be with Intellect combined
It soon makes worthy ; Scripture condescends

Thus to your faculty, when it hands and feet
Ascribes to God, and otherwise intends. 45

And so doth Holy Church of Michael treat,

Gabriel, and him who made Tobias whole,
Adapting human forms to your conceit.

That, which Timæus reasons of the soul,
From what thou findest here is different far, 50

If there his meaning is presented whole.

He says, the soul returns to its own star,

Believing, that from such she is divided,
When forms to bodies set by Nature are ;

And haply was his judgment better guided 55

Than the words look, and haply standeth so,
That his intention must not be derided.

If on these circles he desire to throw

The blame and honour of their influence, then,
Belike, some truth is glanced at by his bow. 60

This principle was felt perversely, when

The ancient world it led so far astray,
And Jove, Mercurius, Mars, were noised by men.

That other doubt, which doth upon thee weigh,

Less venom hath, because from following me, 65
Its malice could seduce thee not away.

That like Injustice should our Justice be

In eyes of mortals, is an argument
Of faith, not of an heretical pravity.

Howbeit, this truth thy powers intelligent 70

Can fairly penetrate, and therefore I
Will make thee, after thy desire, content.

If only where the sufferers nought comply

With that which forceth, Violence exist,
This could yon Spirits no way justify ; 75

For will, not working, doth not so desist,

But, as to fire is natural, doth soar,
Though Violence it a thousand times may twist.

For, whensoever it bendeth less or more,
It follows Violence, and so 'twas here ; 80
These nuns could have repassed the sacred door,
Had but their Will been steadfast and sincere,
As that which on the grate Laurentius held,
And Mutius to his right hand made severe.
Then had it, by the route they came, impelled 85
These to return, on being once set free,
But this unflinching Will is all too seld.
And by these words, if gathered up they be
With heed, the argument is overthrown,
Which would full oft have sorely hindered thee. 90
But now doth rise a second pass upon
Thy view, so strait, that vainly wouldst thou try
To scale it ; thou wouldst faint, wert thou alone.
That never can a blessed Spirit lye,
Since to the Truth of Truths in all time near, 95
This I to thee did surely testify.
And still thou couldest from Piccarda hear,
That Constance' heart unto the veil was true,
And so she seems to contradict me here.

Full oftentimes, O Brother, to eschew 100

Some harm, have men against their liking laid
Their hands on what behoved them not to do.

As when Alcmeon, by his father prayed

Thereof, his mother murdered, and to cleave
To filial piety, was impious made. 105

At such time I would have thee to believe,

That force and will are mixed, and sin doth hence
Arise, which no excuses can receive.

No liking absolute to Ill consents,

But fearing, lest it more distress may reach, 110
By shunning some — in so far it consents.

To liking absolute Piccarda's speech

Refers, and I on other liking glose,
And therefore is a truth declared by each."

Thus welled this holy rivulet, which flows 115

From out the fountains, which all Truths discover,
Thus gave to one and each desire repose.

"O Goddess, loved one of the all first Lover,"

Said I, "that overflow'st me by thy sound,
And warm'st, and more and more with life dost cover,

There's in me no affection so profound, 121

As grace for grace can render, but may he,
Who sees and power has, make thy meed abound.

There's nought can sate our Intellect, I see,

But if the Truth, which doth none others bear 125
Without itself, shall his enlightener be.

Then down he lays himself, like beast in lair,

If it he reach, and he can reach it well ;
For if not, idle would be all our care.

This causeth by the foot of Truth to swell 130

The sprigs of Doubt, and that is Nature too,
Which so doth us from heights to heights impell.

This, this invites, emboldens me from you

To ask, Liege Lady mine, in lowliness,
Another Truth which lies beyond my view. 135

I would enquire, if men may so redress

The broken vow by different mulcts allowed,
That by your standard they may weigh not less."

Beatris lookt on me, in her eyes a crowd

Of loving splendors, O but so divine, 140
That baffled every power within me bowed,
And I came near to swoon with swimming eyne.

CANTO V.

“ If unto thee I flame in fire of love,

Beyond the measure and the wont of earth,
And thy sight beareth not the blaze thereof,
Be not surprised, for this thing has its birth

From insights clear, which as they more detect, 5
So from that good which they have learned look forth.
Full plainly do I see thy Intellect

Emblazed already by that light eterne,
Which, seen but once, enkindleth Love's effect.
And your affections if aught else misturn, 10

'Tis but some trace and likeness of the same,
Ill understood, which there doth glimmering burn.
Thou fain wouldst ask, what service man may frame,
Whereby for vows imperfect to repay,
And make the soul secure from every claim.” 15

Thus Beatris gave beginning to this Lay,

And thus the sacred effluence of her word
Continued, like one speaking without stay.

“No gift God in creating hath conferred

More noble, more the largeness of his grace 20
Fitting, nor higher by himself preferred,

Than that free-will, which he vouchsafes to place

In each and all of his intelligent
Creatures, and hath vouchsafed in every case.

The vow's high value hence by argument 25

Thou mayst derive, if it be such in fact,
That God consenteth, whereto you consent.

For when 'twixt God and man is closed the pact,

There's made a sacrifice of that same treasure,
Such and so great, and made by its own act. 30

The Compensation how will you then measure?

If you pretend to use the offering well,
You make good almsdeed from unrightful seizure.

Now mayst thou safe about the main part dwell,

But seeing Holy Church doth here dispense, 35
Which seems to contravene the truth I tell,

Thou must awhile at table stay, sithence

That rigid food, thou hast partaken, yet
Requires digestives. Open now thy sense
To that which I declare, and firmly set

40

My words within thy mind, for never skill
By teaching, without memory, could commence.
Two parts the nature of the vow fulfil ;

One is the matter, out of which 'tis made,
And one the bounden service of the will.
This last is never cancelled, but if paid,

45

And of the same it therefore is, that so
Precisely by my words the Law was laid.
To offer, therefore, did the Hebrews owe

Without remission, though belike the thing
Could be replaced, as thou art held to know.
The part material of your offering

50

May well be such, that ransomed you may be,
If by sound rule a substitute you bring.
But let no mortal think, that he is free

55

To shift the burthen off his back without
The turn of both the white and yellow key;

III.

D

And every foolish compromise misdoubt,
Unless the substituted value may
Surpass, as three doth two, the work left out. 60
Hence, whatsoever thing shall so much weigh
By proper worth, as every scale to lift,
Thou canst for such no compensation pay.
In vowing let men make no idle shift;
Be faithful, and when faithful, not blear eyed, 65
Like Jephtha, when he made his dearest gift;
For "I have erred," he sooner should have cried,
Than keeping faith, done worse : and thus unwise
Wilt thou find him, that over Greeks ruled wide ;
Whence Iphigene her all-too-beauteous eyes 70
Embathed, and sharers of her weeping made
All who such rites heard mention, fools and wise.
Be you, O Christians, not so lightly swayed,
Be not by every wind like feathers bent,
Nor pardon by all waters deem conveyed. 75
Ye have the Old and eke New Testament,
And have the Church's Shepherd, you to guide,
Let that suffice you for your stablishment.

If evil avarice counsel aught beside,

Be men, O judge not, as the brute perceives, 80
Lest Jews amongst your towns should you deride.

Be not you mated with the lamb, that leaves

His milk, and takes his pleasure in career
Too wanton-frolic, and himself aggrieves."

All this said Beatris, even as you hear, 85

Then turned her brow, solicitous, toward the place
From which the world doth most enlived appear.

Her stillness, and the changing of her face

Imposed a silence on my greedy mind,
Which for new questions found already space ; 90
And as the arrow, which its mark shall find,

And pierce, before the string at rest hath been,
So with the second realm we were combined.

There I so full of joyance saw my Queen,

Upon this heaven's luminary while 95

She entered, that the planet grew more sheen ;
But if the Star was changed and made to smile,

O what was I, that of my nature sure
Am lightly changeable through every style ?

As under guarded waters, husht and pure, 100

The fishes cluster, if the sight on shore
Of aught that seemeth food, shall them allure,

I saw above a thousand lights, which bore

To us-ward, and from all was heard one speech,
"Behold, who come to make our lovings more." 105

And toward us nearer when they 'gan to reach,

Across her tissue, vivid and luminous,
The spirit, exceeding blest, appeared of each.

O Reader, think, if what beginneth thus

Were not continued, how to know the rest 110

Thou wouldst remain with cravings anxious,
And by thyself thou mayst have plainly guest,

How I desired to question of their state
These souls, as soon as they were manifest.

"O Child of Weal, to whom before the date 115

At which thy warfare ceaseth, Grace hath given
Eternal Triumph's Thrones to contemplate,

We by the Love that overstreams all heaven

Are filled, and therefore, if thou long to know
Aught from us, fill thy farthest likings even." 120

Of these kind spirits one bespoke me so,

And Beatris also bade me "Tell, O tell,
And trust, as though to Gods, in what they show."

"I th' nest of thy own light I see thee dwell,

And how thou draw'st it from thine eyes, and how
It flashes, when thou smil'st, observe I well. 126

But know not, who thou art, nor wherefore thou,

O spirit of bliss, art planted in the sphere
To see which rays extrinsic disallow."

So spoke I, turning toward the light, which here 130

Had me addrest before, whereat he grew
Far brighter in his effulgence than before,
And as the Sun, where he repugns our view

With his own brightness, when the warmed sky
Has gnawed the weldings of thick vapors through,
So by much joy was covered from mine eye 136

With his own sheen this hallowed high semblaunt,
And so sequestered made he soon 's reply,
In manner as will my next Canto chaunt.

CANTO VI.

“WHEN Constantine had turned against the Sun
The Eagle's course, which followed it before
Above the Ancient, who Lavinia won,
This bird of God's two hundred years and more
In the uttermost of Europe held his ground 5
Fast by the mountains, whence he sprang of yore ;
And there, with sacred pinions wide around
Shadowing, he ruled the world for his domain,
Changing from hand to hand till mine he found.
Cæsar I was, Justinian I remain ; 10
I took from Law, by all-first Love's consent,
(Therewith I burn,) the excessive and inane.
And ere I was upon this work intent,
I thought one nature dwelt in Christ, not two,
And under such a faith I lived content. 15

But me the blessed Agapetus, who

Was then chief Pastor of the Christian fold,
Unto right faith by his persuasion drew.

To whom I cleaved, and plain as you behold

That contradicting terms are right and wrong, 20
So now appears to me the truth he told.

When smooth I walked with Holy Church along,

To my great labor Heaven was pleased of grace
To prompt me, and I thereto made me strong,
And left my Belisarius in my place 25

The conduct of my wars, whom Heaven so well
Supported, that for rest I found good space.

Thus much it might suffice that I should tell

For thy first question ; howbeit Circumstance
Upon this topic urges me to dwell : 30

That thou mayst know, what reasons countenance

To vex this hallowed-holy sign both those
Who call him theirs, and 'gainst him arms advance.

Behold, what glorious ancient deeds impose

Upon us reverence for him, from that hour 35
When Pallas died, on whom his rule arose !

Thou know'st, in Alba how he made his bower
Three hundred years and more, untill the last,
When three fought three again to build his Power.
Thou know'st his works, as through the kings he past,
From rape of Sabines to Lucretia's tears, 41
When o'er the nations round his yoke he cast.
Thou know'st, how he was borne by gallant spears
Of Rome against the Epeirot and the Gaul,
Against the princes but and leagues of peers. 45
Whence Quintus, whom of locks untrimmed we call,
The Decii, and Torquatus, had that fame
I gladly blaze, and hence the Fabii all.
He did the Arabians' overweenings tame,
When down those Alpine rocks, from which thou, Po,
Descendest, after Hannibal they came. 51
In early age beneath him Scipio
Triumphed, and Pompey, proving to that hill,
Which thou wast born beneath, so dire a foe.
Then came that hour, when Heaven was pleased to fill
The world again with quiet like its own, 56
And Cæsar raised this bird by Rome her will.

Then what he wrought from Rhine to Var, Saone
Hath seen, Arar, Isère, and every glen,
Whose tribute swells the defluence of Rhone. 60
That which he wrought beyond Ravenna when
He past, and oversprang the Rubicon,
Was higher than all pitch of tongue or pen.
To Spain he turned his battle-power anon,
Thence on Dyrrachium and Pharsale arose, 65
Till Nile was hot with agony ; thence upon
Simois he looked, the mountain whence he rose,
Antandros, and where Hector sleeps his last,
And ill for Ptolemy shook off his repose.
To Juba, rapid as lightning, next he past, 70
Then turned, where you behold your sunset, where
Pompeius yet prolonged the clarion's blast.
Of what he made his next uplifter dare,
Brutus with Cassius barks in hell-pit set,
And Modona and Perugia wailed whilere. 75
This wails the woful Cleopatra yet,
Who, flying from his face, was of the snake
Enforced, a livid and eager death to get.

In that same hand he made the Red Sea shake ;

Therein such peace upon the World he brought 80
That men the shrine of Janus might forsake.

But that which by the lauded sign was wrought

Till this, and which to follow yet was sure,
Through Earth his realm in his allegiance taught,
Grows in appearance trifling and obscure, 85

If in third Cæsar's hand the effect you seek
With eyebeam single and intention pure.

For living Justice, that by whom I speak,

Allowed him in the hands of whom I name,
The glory, upon her wrongs the wrath to wreak. 90
Attend now well, to what discourse I frame.

Next this he scoured with Titus, and repaid
Vengeance for vengeance of the antique blame.
Next, when the Longobardian tooth had preyed

On holy Church, below that Eagle's wing 95
Came Charles the Great, and triumphed in her aid.
Consider now, if wrong reproach I fling

On whom I named above, and their bad zeal,
Which is the cause, whence your mishaps all spring. *

One sets against the flag of Public Weal 100

The fleur-de-lis, one plays a private part
Therewith, and most who sins 'tis hard to feel.

Let, let the Ghibellines pursue their art,

By other flags, for this one ill may bear
He, who from justice keeps him ever apart. 105

Let Charles the Younger and his Guelfs not dare

To beat him down, nay, but those talons dread,
That from a prouder lion have pulled hair.

Full oft the tears are by the children shed,

Whose fathers sinned, and think you, God shall leave
His arms, and take your flower-de-luce instead? 111

This little star is furnished to receive

Found-worthy spirits that have active been
That fame and good report they might achieve.

And whensoever affections downward lean, 115

Diverging thus, it follows that the rays
Of genuine love must upward mount less sheen.

But even this, that each one's bliss repays

His merits duly, makes our joy to grow,
For none too great or small his meed surveys. 120

The living Justice our affection so

Doth by these means attemper, that our feet
Astray to no iniquities can go.

As diverse voices in choice music meet,

Lo! thus in blessed life doth throne by throne, 125
Among these orbs make modulation sweet.

And in the pearl, which now thou look'st upon,

There shines a Light, (and Romeo was his name,)
For whose great goodly deed small thanks were shown.
But those Provençals, who are here to blame, 130

Got little mirth; and theirs be dole and teen,
Who from good works of others work their shame.
Four daughters, and of each a wedded queen

Had Raymond Berlinghier, and this was wrought
By Romeo, by this man obscure and mean. 135
Then by intriguers' arts his lord was brought

To ask a reckoning of that servant just,
Who six with five returned where ten he sought;
Then old and poor, trudged out into the dust;

And if the world but knew, what heart he wore, 140
In begging for his bread, crust after crust,
They praise him now, and yet would praise him more."

CANTO VII.

“BE hallowed, holy God of Sabaôth,*

Who overshinest in thy Light of Light
The blissful ardors of these Malakhôth?†

Thus to his gyre returning, in my sight,

That Son of life eternal seemed to sing, 5

Above whose head the double sheen was bright ;

And so resumed the dance amidst his ring ;

Then all behind the mask of distance fell,
Rapid, as a spark was ever seen to spring.

I pondered in my doubts, and “ tell them, tell,” 10

My heart said in me, “ tell to lady mine,
Who kills our thirst by words that sweetly well.”

But that respect, whose lordly bounds confine

My will, at only hearing BE and IS,
Made me, like one who drowzes, to incline. 15

* Hosts.

† Kingdoms.

Not long could I remain, for Beatris

Beshone me with a smile, that might have made
A man, set round with fire, to breathe in bliss.

And, "I infallibly perceive," she said,

"That, how a just revenge can justly be 20
Avenged, this question in thy thoughts is weighed.

But I will set thy mind full quickly free,

And thou give ear, for knowledge of great
worth

In what I speak shall be conferred on thee.

The man, who lived without the mean of birth, 25

Not brooking for his weal his will to rein,
Dooming himself, doomed all his race on earth ;
From whose default mankind hath ailing lain,

Through ages, with vast error roofed above,
Till to come down the Word of God was fain, 30

And was in Person made partaker of

This Nature, from her Founder gone astray—
By the sheer act of his perpetual love.

Now turn thy face on that which I shall say—

This Nature now, in her Creator blent, 35
As he created, good and flawless lay.

Yet still was exiled, and incompetent

Of Paradise, ever since beyond the course
Of truth, and of her native life, she went.

The sentence then, to which the Cross gave force, 40

If by th' assumèd Nature you it scan,
There was none ever had so just a source,
Nor more unrighteous, since the world began,

If him that suffered you regard alone,
By whom was borne the nature of a man. 45

Thus from one act are diverse issues shown ;

For by one death the Jews and God were pleased ;
Therethrough quaked Earth, and heaven was open
thrown.

Now from this difficulty art thou eased,

Enquiring, how by vengeance of a just 50
Avengement was a righteous court appeased.

But I discern, that now thy mind is thrust

From thought to thought amidst a coil, from whence
To loose herself she hath no little lust.

Thou sayst, herein I well discern thy sense, 55

Yet comprehend not, why in but this guise
God unto man's redemption would dispense.

This judgement, Brother mine, low-buried lies
For every mind, which hath not at the flame
Of Love matured the virtue of its eyes. 60
But I will tell thee now, since hereat aim
Full many, and the target few discern,
Why worthiest of its end this means became.
Our God his goodness from herself doth spurn
All grudge, and in herself doth sparkling blaze, 65
And setteth forth her goodliness eterne.
That, which from her without a medium rays,
Is never-ending, since no younger hours
Can blur the stamp, where she the signet lays.
That, which from her without a medium showers, 70
Is free, self-moving, for it cannot be
Subjected to the later births their powers.
'Tis like her most, and it most liketh she ;
Because the holy heat, whence all things glow,
In things most like it, plays most living-free. 75
In all these points the human creature so
Is vantaged, and if one but him forsake,
Needs must he from his Worship fall down low.

Sin can alone disfranchise him, and make

Unlike the Sovran Good ; so that from all 80

Its rays but little whiteness he can take.

Nor can he once again his rank recall,

Unless by filling what is void by crime,

Drinking for guilty sweets deservèd gall.

It follows, that our Nature, from the time 85

She sinned in all her substance, hath been cast

From all these honors, as from Eden's clime,

And could recover not, from first to last,

(If you the question shall most finely view,)

Unless by one of these two fords she past ; 90

That God should either grant free pardon through

His nobleness, or man that wrought amiss

Should by himself the satisfaction do.

Now fix thy look direct within the abyss

Of Counsels everlasting, on my speech 95

Attending, far as thou canst follow this.

Man could not by his Nature's limits reach

To compensating ; how could he descend,

In late obedience that degree through which

He meant by his transgression to ascend ? 100

Behold the reason, why by his own deed
Man was allowed not his estate to mend.

It was with God left therefore to proceed,

[By mercy or by justice,] by one course
Of his, or both, for your redemption's need. 105

But since all benefits with greater force

Oblige, as better they shall manifest
The goodness of the mind, that is their source,
Our God his goodness, through the world imprest,

Has been contented by the twofold way 110
To go to work in your redemption's quest.

And twixt the latest night and earliest day,

The world no such procedure great and high
On either hath surveyed, nor shall survey.

For God more bounteous gave himself, whereby 115

Man might suffice for man's own restoration,
Than if by grace he should them justify.

And every plan besides for your Salvation

Had fallen short, but if God's only Son
Himself had humbled unto Incarnation. 120

But now to comment on some words I run

Back somewhat, to fulfill thy whole desire,
That thou mayst here view plain, as I have done.

Thou sayst, I see the air, the water, fire

And earth, and all commixtures where they blend,
Come to corruption, when brief terms expire ; 126
And Creatures in all such I apprehend,

So these, if that which I have heard be truth,
Should safe be, to have no decay nor end.

The Angels, O my Brother, and that sooth- 130

Faced land, in which thou art, Creatures to be,
All whole as they exist, may claim forsooth.

But all these elements, just named by thee,

And all things, which of their commixture rise,
Informed are by created faculty. 135

Created is the matter, they comprise ;

The virtue, which informs them, is created,
In one or other star that round them flies.

The souls, with which the brute and plant are freighted,

The rays and movements of the holy fires 140
Educe from composites potentiated.

But Sovran Grace without a mean inspires

Our Life, and her of him enamoreth, so
That Him she everlastingly desires.

And hereby also thou the truth mayst know 145

Of our own resurrection, having weighed
The mode our flesh was wrought-in long ago,
When our first parents, he and she, were made.

CANTO VIII.

THE world supposed of yore, a perilous creed,
That lovely Cypris, under heaven's third
Orb circling, scattered passion's maddening seed;
Whence not to laud her power alone were heard
The shouts of worshippers, and victims bled, 5
In these old nations, as of old they erred,
But Cupid's and Dione's honor spread,
And one they called her mother, one her child,
And he to 've sat in Dido's barm was said.
So too from her, that heads this lay, they styled 10
Yon planet beautiful, by whom the Sun
Is now i' th' eyes, now in the neck besmiled.
Our mounting, ere it was perceived, was done,
But the star entered I could well suppose,
When my liege lady had more beauty won. 15

And as amidst the flame the sparkle shows,
As voice through other voice is heard aright,
If one remains, and th' other comes and goes,
Thus lamps I saw, that circled in this light,
And more or less, methought, of speed upheld, 20
To suit the eternal tenure of their sight.
No wind was e'er from colder cloud impelled
In blast invisible or in lightning gleam,
Which, had you but those lights divine beheld,
Would not then sluggish and encumbered seem, 25
(As toward us they advanced, leaving the gyre
Commenced among the exalted Seraphîm).
And after those, that in the front came nigher,
Sounded Hosannas, which afresh to hear
I never since was left without desire. 30
Then one among them, toward us drawing near,
Alone began, "We 're ready all to do,
That we may glad thee, all thou holdest dear.
We circle with the heavenly Princedoms through
One orbit, and like speed, like thirst we prove ; 35
These are they, whom on earth thou sang'st unto,

‘Ye that, contemplating, the third heaven move;’

And we’re so love-rich, that for thy content
Some while to rest shall us no less behoove.”

Then after I had reverently bent 40

My eyes upon my lady’s face, and she
Had made them blithe and sure with her consent,
They turned upon the light, which promised me

Such goodness, and with deep emotion brake
My voice forth, saying, “Tell me what are ye?” 45
And O, but how I saw new blitheness make

Addition to the muchness and the mode
Of his preceding blitheness, while I spake!
Such grown he said, “The world for my abode

Not long was lent, though longer had it been, 50
Much ill were spared that now is on the road.
My gladness hides me from thee, for its sheen

Involves, and beams about me, and above,
As creatures overcharged with fleece are seen.
Well didst thou love me, and hadst cause to love, 55

For had I longer lived, I would have shown
Thee somewhat more than barren leaves of love.

That shore, which on the left is bathed by Rhone,
From where La Sorgue and he their waves confound,
In season looked for me to fill the throne. 60

So did yon foreland of Italia, towned
With Gâeta, Bari, and Crotona, there
Where Tronto and Verde from the deep rebound.
And of the land, that Danube waters, where
The borders of the Germans first are past, 65
My brows began the glittering crown to bear.
The fair Trinacria, darkly oft o'ercast,

Where 'twixt Pelorus and Pachynum snarls
The gulf, that whitens most i'th' Eural blast,
Not from Typhoeus, but from sulphurous marls 70

Enkindling, yet might wait her monarchs, all
Through me from blood of Rodolph and of Charles,
If evil rule, which cannot fail to gall

The subject nations, had not roused in arms
Palermo, for the French their death to call. 75

And if my brother hence had some alarms
Conceived, the Catalonians' grasping need
Would fly ere this — to work him no worse harms.

For care is wanting to be given indeed

By him, or by some else, lest all amount 80
Of freight the burthen of his bark exceed.

His nature, which, derived from generous fount

Is niggard, would an army want of such
As nought would in their coffers care to count."

"Dear lord of mine, because my joy, so much 85

As by thy speaking 'tis poured out on me,
Where the ends and origins of all joys touch
Appears, as I behold it, so to thee,

Thence I rejoice, and sweet too this I find
That thou to Godward looking shouldst it see. 90

Thou hast rejoiced me ; now then clear my mind,
As thou to doubt hast moved me by thy speech,
How can the sweet leave bitter germs behind?"

These words were mine, he answered, "In thy reach

I'll set the truth, that now behind thee lies ; 95
That Good, who blesseth and revolveth each
Orb of the kingdom, wherein thou dost rise,

Works out by all these vast rotundities
His Providence, (their virtues which applies.)

And not foreseen each nature only is 100

In the mind, perfect of itself alone,
But each together with his bourne of bliss.
So therefore all, that from this bow is thrown,

Falls predisposed for its appointed end
As right, as arrow against the target flown. 105

Were this not so, the heaven thou dost ascend

Would after such wise order its effects,
That not to works, but ruins would they tend.

This cannot be, unless those intellects

That move these heavens, full perfection lack, 110
As must the First, except he them corrects.

Shall I this argument more whitely track?"

"Nay, for I see't impossible," said I,
"That Nature should i'th' needed course grow slack."

"And would men," he resumed, "be losers by 115
Remaining Citizens no longer?" "Yea,

And here I ask no proof," was my reply.

"Well now, unless by various functions they

Live on the earth distinguished, can this be?

No, surely, if the truth your Master say." 120

Thus far with premises proceeded he,

And then concluded, "So the roots, that bear
These your results, must likewise disagree.

Thus, here's a Solon born, a Xerxes there,

And here Melchizedek, there him behold, 125
Who lost his son, in winging middle air.

The circle-working Nature, that doth mould

Your mortal wax, doth well her work indeed,
But is by no respect of place controlled.

Hence comes it, Esau issues from one seed 130

With Jacob, and the Twins of Rome partake
A blood so vile, that Mars his name they need.

The gendered Nature would her path still make

Like that which her begetters walked of yore,
Did Providence divine her rule not break. 135

Now that, which was behind thee, stands before,

But that, how dear I hold thee, thou mayst rate,
Put in thy mantle one deduction more.

Nature in all time, if she find her state

Incongruous, like a seed, that from its place 140
Hath been transplanted, needs must derogate.

And if your world down yonder would that base

Regard, which Nature setteth down for each,

It, following her, would much exalt its race.

But ye the life monastic wrongly teach 145

To those that are but fit the sword to gird,

And kings ye make whose talent is to preach ;

'Tis thus that from the path your feet have erred."

CANTO IX.

AFTER thy Charles, O queen Clementia fair,

Had thus illumed, he told me of the cheat,
That was i' th' future to befall his heir.

But "whisht," he said, "and leave the years to fleet ;"

Hence more I can repeat not, save that wo 5

Deserved shall overtake your wrongers' feet.

And now the life within that hallowed glow

Had on the Sun, which fills them, turned again,

As toward the Weal, that all things feasteth so.

Ah souls deceived, ah impious and inane, 10

From such a weal your hearts who disunite,

Turning your temples to appearance vain !

And now another splendor, growing bright,

As she approached, and brighter in her blee,

Made manifest, she fain would me delight. 15

And Beatris her eyes, which over me

Were guarding, by my own again besought,
Of loved allowance gave the guarantee.

"And O let my desire not come to nought,"

Said I, "thou blessed Spirit, and prove it true, 20
That I within thee can reflect my thought."

Thereat the lamp, which was to me still new,

From out her depth, wherein she sang before,
Went on as who delighteth well to do.

"Above the tract of lewd Italian shore, 25

Between Rialto and the springs," she said,
"That Brenta and Piâvè's outgoings restore,
There stands a hill, nor raises high its head,

From which a spark, that on the country flew
With terriblest assault, was whilom shed. . 30

From one ancestral root with him I grew;

Cunizza was my name, and here I shine,
As one the planet's brightness did subdue.

But lightly I forgive this fault of mine,

The occasion of my lot, (which may perplex 35
Your common sort,) nor doth it make me pine.

The loved and lustrous diamond, who decks

This heaven upon my dearer side, great praise
Has left on earth, and time shall yet annex
Five hundredth years to this, ere it decays— 40

Who now can motives for well doing lack,
That life may from the first life's ashes blaze?
And hereof little thinks yon modern pack

Whose bounds Adige and Tagliamento lave,
Nor yet for being beaten turn they back ; 45
But Padua's blood shall mottle soon the wave,

That underneath Vicenza creeps, sithence
Her sons are in the teeth of Duty brave.
And nigh Cagnâno and Silë's confluence, 49

There's one, who lords it, and his head bears high,
For whom the weavings of the snares commence.
And Feltro, ere a long time yet go by,

Shall her ungodly pastor's treason wail,
Than whom no worse in Marta's dungeons lie.
There's Ferrarese blood, which too vast a pail 55

Would need to hold it, and whoe'er should weigh
The several ounces, from fatigue would fail ;

Blood, which this courteous Churchman, to display

His partisanship, shall present, which kind
Of gifts shall be in the country's general way. 60

Aloft are mirrors, (Thrones the name assigned

By you,) which make to us God manifest
As Judge ; hence comely such proclaims we find."

She ended here, and made as though imprest

With some new thought, and freshly toward the ring,
In posture as before, herself addrest. 66

Then seemed a wondrous and a glorious thing

That second gladness, whom ere this I knew,
As when fine rubies to the sun you bring :

For joy up yonder giveth brightness new, 70

As laughter here, but down below the shade,
Saddening within itself, grows dusk in hue.

"O blessed spirit, all things are displayed

To God, and from his sight thy own sight fills ;
No will to thee with cloud is overlaid. 75

Then wherefore does thy voice, which heaven thrills

With yon God-loving fires, who make of three
Wings either side their mantle—wherefore stills

Thy voice not my desirings ; I would thee
So long not keep, awaiting my demand, 80
If I were in thee selved, as thou in me."
"The largest valley, wherein floods expand,"
(Thus after mine the spirit's words begun,)
"Save that, which draws about the world a band,
Between war-brooding coasts against the sun, 85
So far, as maketh its meridian line
Of its horizon, hath free course to run.
A country on that valley's shore was mine,
Twixt Ebro and Macra, where some little way
The Tuscans and the Genoese confine. 90
My birthplace nearly shareth with Boujaye
The hours of sunrise and of sunset — there
Hath once the blood of patriots warmed the bay.
Men called me Fûlk, when of my name aware ;
As living by this planet I have been 95
Charactered, so doth she mine impress bear.
For not more hotly burned the Carthage queen,
Sichæus' and Creusa's grief, than I,
While chartered youth was on my features seen.

Not more the Rhodopean maid, who by 100

Demophoon was ensnared, not Hercules

Letting Iolè next his heart-strings lie,

Nor here is this repented, but doth please ;—

The fault I say not, which none recollect,

But the Excellence, which orders and foresees. 105

Here look we through the art, which things hath
deckt

So nobly, and discern the world below,

Turned by the upper with how bright effect.

But that thou mayst all satisfaction know

To thy desires, the children of our sphere, 110

Behoves it, that I should still farther go.

Thou wouldst enquire, what is the soul most near

My own, which yonder glory doth enclose,

Like sunbeam columned upon waters clear.

Now know, that Rahab therein hath repose 115

Eternal, and as one amongst us made,

With all the brightness of this heaven she
glows.

In th' orbit, whereon terminates the shade,
By which around your earth the light is riven,
She first of souls from Christ his triumph stayed. 120
'Twas fit that she, in this or some one heaven,
Should rest, a trophy of the conquered scope,
For which the two uplifted palms were given,
Because she favored the first glorious hope
Of Joshua, entering on that holy land, 125
For whose remembrance small care has the Pope.
Thy City, planted by that rebel's hand,
Who turned his face from his Creator first,
Whose envy such a world of harm has planned,
Brings forth and spreads the floren flower accursed, 130
That makes the shepherd for the wolves a mate,
Whence widely are the flocks and herds disperst.
For this the Gospel and the Doctors great
Are quitted, only the Decretal books
Are conned, as by their margins you may rate. 135
To this the Pope, the Holy College looks,
But of that Nazareth where Gabriel
His wings unfolded, not a thought he brooks.

But speedily the Vatican, as well

As all th' elected parts of Rome, which were 140
Graves of those levies, who for Peter fell,
Shall get their quittance of th' adulterer.

CANTO X.

HIS Son regarding with the Love, that hence
And thence eternally doth emanate,
The all-first, inexpressive Excellence
Far as can eyes or minds expatiate,
Has wrought with order such as cannot be 5
But dear to every soul to contemplate.
Lift to these high rotations then with me,
Reader, thine eyes directly toward that part,
Where motion striking motion first we see ;
And there begin to revel upon the art 10
Of Him, who made them, and such loving heed
Has of them, that his eyes do ne'er depart.
Behold the branching circle thence proceed
Obliquely, which the planets doth convey,
To satisfy the world's perpetual need. 15

And if no longer slanting were its way,

Much heavenly virtue would in vain be spent,

And welnigh all power here would faint away.

And if diverging more or less it went

From its directness, then would incomplete 20

Much order rest in earth and firmament.

Now, good my reader, rest upon thy seat,

And let thy thought upon this foretaste dwell,

Which, ere it cloyes thee, shall be passing sweet.

I've set before thee ; for thyself do well ; 25

Because that record, whereof I sustain

The charge, doth toward itself my care compell.

The chiefest Ministrant of Nature's reign,

By whom the world's with heavenly virtue signed,

Whose light doth all our seasons ascertain, 30

In this part entered, which I call to mind,

Was moving in the spiral courses where

Day by day faster toward us he must wind.

And I was with him, but my mounting there

As little had perceived, as men before 35

All thought of entered place can be aware.

Lo! such is Beatris, who guides us o'er

So rapidly from good to better site,

Her act is measurable in time no more.

How must that essence in itself be bright, 40

Which in the Sun, wherein I was received,

Could show itself, and not by hue, but light?

The sight be hoped for, and the thing believed ;

For practice, art, nor genius could avail

My song, that I should make it thence conceived. 45

And if our fancies such a height to scale

Are feeble, wherefore needs it admiration

That eyes to reach beyond the sun must fail?

Such were they, whom in this fourth habitation

The most high Father with the knowledge fed 50

Of God's Procession and God's Filiation.

And Beatris began, "Give thanks," she said,

"Thanks to that Sun of Angels, by whose grace

Art thou to such a high perception led."

In mortal heart was ne'er so large a space 55

Found for devotion, ne'er was one so prone

God's cause with all his loving to embrace,

As, after hearing this, became my own;

And He my whole desire did so comprise,
That Beatris forgot in shade was thrown; 60

Nor grudged she, nay but smiled in such a guise

That my collected thoughts took various flight
Before the splendor of the kindling eyes.

Lo, many a vivid, many a dazzling light,

Their centre us, themselves our garland made, 65
All sweet in harmony, as in lustre bright!

Latona's daughter oft we see arrayed

With such a girdle, when the moistened air
With threads to form its tissue is purveyed.

There's many a gem, so beautiful and rare, 70

Within the heavenly court, from which I come,
That such beyond the kingdom none can bear.

Of which the singings of these lights are some;

Who makes himself no wings to reach that goal,
Here let him ask more tidings from the dumb. 75

Thus singing when these burning suns to roll

Around us thrice had ceased, like the career
Of stars adjoining to the firm-set pole,

They seemed as ladies from the dance not clear,

But hearkening still and silent in suspense 80

Till the resumption of the notes they hear.

And therewith one of them began, "Sithence

The beams of mercy, which to just love lend

Its kindling spark, and are augmented thence,

Do multiplied to thee their light extend 85

So much, that it conducts thee up the stair

Which none descendeth but to reascend,

If with thy thirst we should refuse to share

Wine from our flask, such freedom would be ours,

As waters have, which cannot seawards bear. 90

Thou wouldst enquire, of what plants are the flowers,

That make the garland, which surrounds and woos

Thy lovely liege who thee to heaven empowers.

I was a lamb i'th' hallowed fold, for whose

Direction Dominic a path has shown, 95

Where well they feed, unless themselves they lose.

Next on my right is Albert of Cologne,

And me Thomas Aquinas thou mayst call,

Who him for fellow-monk and master own.

If thou wouldst know these others one and all,

Then let thine eye upon my words attend,

Circling the bliss-abounding coronall.

That second blaze the joys of Gratian send

Abroad, who served both Courts in such a measure
As rendered him in Paradise a friend. 105

And he who next in place our quire doth pleasure,

Petrus Lombardus, like the widow's mite
To holy Church made offering of his Treasure.

The fifth amongst us, and the fairest light

So lovingly's inspired, that all folks he 110
Makes thirst for news of his eternal plight.

In that exalted light was such degree

Of Knowledge set, that if the truth be true,
There has not risen a second more to see.

Next him the light of that sustainer view, 115

That while he walked in flesh the angelicall
Nature and functions most profoundly knew.

And smiling in that further light so small

Thou seest a champion of the Christian creed,
Whose Latin Austin stored himself withal. 120

Now, if the eye-beam of thy mind proceed
From light to light, the follower of my praise,
To know the eighth already thou wilt need.
There blessèd from beholding all good stays
That soul untarnished, who the treacherous lease, 125
If well perused, of worldly joys displays.
That body, whence her violent decease
She made, Cieldauro covers, and she ran
From pangs and exile into th' endless peace.
Beyond thou mayst the flaming lustre scan 130
Of Isidore, of Bede, and that *Richart*
Who was in contemplation more than man.
And he, from whom thy looks returning are
To me, a spirit was, that in austere
Deep musings often thought death kept too far. 135
That is the light eternal of Sigier,
Who while in *Rue de Fouarre* his days he wore,
Has argued hateful truths in haughtiest ear."
Now, like the peals that summon us, before
The Bride goes forth, her matten song to make 140
To Christ her Lord, that he may love her more,

Which now to this, now that part, pull and shake,
 Sounding their ding-dong in so sweet a tone
That well disposèd hearts to love they wake,
Thus I perceived that high and glorious zone 145
 To move, and voice to answer voice in measure
And mood, whose like for sweetness are unknown,
Save where is perpetuity of pleasure.

CANTO XI.

O MAD anxieties of human kind !

How inconclusive are the syllogisms,
That make ye downward keep your wings inclined !
One man the Canons, one the Aphorisms

Was turning, one man for a priesthood sued, 5
One sought a realm by violence or by schisms,
One robbery, one affairs of state pursued,

He gave himself to idleness, and he
Was making himself weary — to be lewd.
When I, from these, and all the like set free, 10

Aloft with Beatris in heavenly land
Was being entertained so gloriously.

When each the circle had remeasured, and
Returning, halted where his previous site
He held, as tapers in the lustre stand, 15

I was aware of words within the light

Arising, whence before I was addrest,
The while it smiling grew more glorious white.

“As kindled by his ardor is my breast,

So I, by looking on the light eterne, 20
Perceive thy thoughts, whereof thou reasonest.

Thou doubtest, and, my meaning to discern,

Thy powers a more unravelled language need,
More plain, by which they can more smoothly learn,
Concerning how I said, ‘Where well they feed,’ 25

And eke, ‘no second hath arisen,’ and here
To well distinguish must we take good heed.

That Providence, who rules the world’s career

With order, wherein all created eyes
Fall short, ere to the bottom they come near, 30

To make the Bride of Him, who with loud cries

Espoused her in his blessed blood, pursue
That road, on which her satisfaction lies,

More fearlessly, and to himself more true,

Ordained in her behalf, that so she might 35
Have each way one to guide her, guardians two.

In ardor was the one seraphic quite,
The other, by his wisdom, came to lend
To earth a splendor of cherubic light :
I'll speak of one, for either to commend 40
Is both to mention, take whiche'er you will,
For one was of their double ways the end.
There hangs between Tupîno and the rill
That on the mount, which blest Ubaldo chose,
Is born, a fruitful slope o' th' lofty hill ; 45
Whence frost or heat upon Perugia flows
Through Porta Solè, and behind it wails
Gualdo, with Nócera, hard oppression's woes,
Above that bank, where most the steepness fails,
Hath on the world a Sun made like ascent 50
As ours doth, when from Ganges heaven he scales.
Which place then whosoever names, if bent
To speak, as may not misbecome its worth,
Should not Ascêsi say, but Orient.
The time was not far distant from his birth, 55
When from his wondrous properties began
Some consolation to be felt on earth.

Since for a lady, whom another man

As lief as death had from his chamber door

Excluded, into variance he ran 60

A young man with his father, and before

His ghostly court, *et coram patre* made

Her his, and day by day then loved her more.

She, parted from her first espoused, had stayed

Eleven full hundred years, despised and drear 65

Till this man came—her love had no one prayed.

Nor aught availed it, that his voice to hear

Nought dreading, she with Amyclas was found

By one, who overspread the world with fear.

Nor aught, in faith and courage to abound 70

So highly, that with Christ upon the tree

She mounted up, while Mary kept on ground.

But lest too intricate my language be,

Take thou henceforward for this loving pair

In speech detailed, Francis and Poverty. 75

Their singleness of heart and gladsome air,

And love, and rapture, and their glances kind,

To many a holy thought incentives were.

The venerable Bernard thence resigned

His shoes the first, and after bliss so great 80

Ran forth, and, running, thought he lagged behind.

O wealth unknown, O truly blissful state!

Behind the bridegroom now Egidius bares,

Sylvester now ; so dear the bride they rate.

Then forth that father and that master fares 85

Together with his Wife and with his race,

And each with him the lowly girdle shares.

Nor drooped he out of cowardice his face,

For being Pietro Bernardonë's *child*,

Nor for his estimation wondrous base, 90

But royally to Innocent revealed

His rugged purpose, and from him the grant

Obtained, by which his rule was firstly sealed.

Then as increased the nation mendicant

In following him, whose wondrous life they would

Better in empyrean glory chaunt, 96

The course that holy Mandriarch pursued

Through Pope Honorius with a crown more late

Was gifted by the eternal Sanctitude.

And when, from thirsting for the Martyr's fate, 100

In the proud Sultan's presence to propound
Of Christ he came, and every his comate,
And for conversion when unripe he found

The nation there, and, not to work in vain,
Came back to harvests of the Italian ground, 105
Of Christ he did the latest seal obtain,

(Which two long years his body bore,) between
Tybris and Arno, on the rocks of pain.

When God, by whom such Weal to him had been

Appointed, called him, that reward to see, 110
Which he acquired in making himself mean,
Then, dying, to his brethren trusted he

As to just heirs, and bade that with sincere
Faith they should love her, his most dear ladye.

And 'twas her breast that soul without a peer 115

Chose to depart from, toward his own Domain,
And else would for his body have no bier.

Think now, what man was worthy to sustain,

With such a one confederate, Peter's bark,
To harbor pushing straight through high-wrought
main? 120

And such thou must declare our Patriarch ;

Hence he, that follows him, and that obeys,
(Thou 'lt see) a goodly venture must embark.

But now so greedy is the flock to graze

On variable swards, that help is none, 125

But over meadows far apart it strays.

And aye as farther from his face they run,

And as they straggle more, the emptier aye
Of milk returneth to the fold each one.

There are, who truly fear the scath, and nigh 130

The shepherd throng ; yet have so few occurred
That but a little cloth may cowls supply.

Now, if not hoarsely uttered be my word,

If duly thy attention hath been lent,

If thou recall to mind what thou hast heard ; 135

Thy wishes this in one part may content ;

For thou wilt know this brotherhood—from whose
Stock they fall off—and see what thing is meant,
By ‘ well they feed, unless themselves they lose.’”

CANTO XII.

As soon as e'er that blessed flame the sound
Of his last word had finished, all its throng
That holy disk began to turn around.
And through one circle ere they past along,
I saw another ring about them close, 5
And movement link with movement, song with song.
That song as much beyond our Muses rose,
Our Sirens, warbling in their dulcet flute,
As the first lustre its reflex outgoes.
As over downy clouds two arches shoot, 10
And like in colors, like in path they run,
When Juno's maid her charge would execute,
The outer springing from the inmost one,
(As 't were the voice of that fair damsel who
Consumed in Love, as vapors in the Sun ;) 15

Which renders people here prophetic through

That covenant, which God to Noë sware,
That waters shall no more the world undo,
So twined about us these perpetual-fair

Roses their double wreath, so might I see 20
The farther one the nearer's likeness bear.

Now when the dance, and all the jubilee,

Not only of the singing, but the blaze
Of light to light in loving game and glee,
Ceast at one will, one moment, as obeys 25

Each eyelid simultaneously the claim
Of our free will, to shut them or to raise ;
So heard I, deep within a new-come flame,

A voice, that like the needle to the pole
Made me appear, in turning, whence it came. 30

"The love, that makes me fair," he said, "my soul

Invites, to reason of yon other guide,
Through whom doth he so well my guide extoll.
Where one is, there 'tis fitting by his side

To bring his fellow, that as in one sphere 35
They fought, their glory too may shine allied.

The Lord Christ's army, whom it cost so dear
Rearming, marched behind his colors few
In numbers, faint of limb, and sad of cheer ;
When th' Emperor, who reigneth all time through, 40
For his emperilled host his care bestirred,
Through his mere bounty, not for guerdon due,
And succored his Espoused, as thou hast heard,
By these two champions, who the routed band
Brought to their ranks by deed alike and word. 45
Lo, where the tender leaflets to expand,
That reapparel in their fresh array
All Europe, goeth forth the West wind bland,
Not far, from where the billows turn to spray,
Behind whose column from all living eyes 50
The sun is often hid by length of way,
There fortunate doth Callaroga rise,
Protected by the mighty shield, that shows
The Lion, who subdues, and subject lies.
'Tis hence the amorous paramour arose 55
Of Christian faith, that athlete sanctified
Who loved her friends, and tendered not her foes ;

Whose mind, from its creation, was supplied
With living virtue, such that while its power
Within his mother wrought, she prophesied. 60
When solemnized had been the bridal hour
Betwixt the faith and him at holy fount,
Where mutual salvation was the dower,
The lady, who had vowed on his account, 64
Saw dreaming that, which would from him proceed,
And from his heirs—how wondrous its amount.
And hence, that word and fact might be agreed,
(A spirit moving them,) his name was made
From that possessive, which he was indeed,
Dominicus, and I would have him weighed 70
As that elected husbandman, whom Christ
Within his vineyard called to give him aid.
A Servant and Ambassador of Christ
Well seemed he, for the love he first made known
Was for the counsel earliest given of Christ. 75
Oft has he, silent, waking and alone,
Been found by her who nurst him, on the earth,
As one who said, 'This portion is my own.'

O truly was the author of his birth

Called Felix, truly was his mother Jane 80

(If our interpretation aught be worth,)

Not from the world, for which men strive and strain

In Ostiensis and Thaddeo's trace,

But counting the true manna for their gain.

A doctor great he grew in little space ; 85

And entered on the circuit of the Vine,

That fadeth soon, if husbandmen are base.

Before the Chair, that once was more benign

To righteous poor men, though not hers the blame,

But that successor's, who corrupts the line, 90

Not for the next spare benefice he came, "

Not to commute for six with two and three,

Not tithes, which are the poor of God's, to claim,

But 'gainst an erring world petitioned he

For leave to combat for the seed, whence four 95

And twenty plants are now encircling thee.

Then, armed with both authority and lore,

In functions apostolic, sallied out,

Like torrents, urged up from deep water-store.

* * * * * 100

* * * * *

* * * * *

Of him there since hath issued many a rill,

By which the Catholic Gardens watered are,
So that the plants are fresh and verdant still. 105

Look now, if such was one wheel of the car,

By which the holy Church herself defended,
And conquered in the field her civil jar,
Well may the excellence be comprehended

Of the other one, which ere I met thy view, 110
Was by our Thomas courteously commended.

But now the track its higher portion drew

In its revolving has been lost, and where
Was wine upon its lees, is must in lieu.

His company, who started straight and fair, 115

With feet upon his track, are turnèd so
That 'gainst the hindmost kick the foremost there.
But of their evil tillage they shall know

The harvest, when the tares, that grew between
The wheat, shall grieve the garner to forego. 120

I own indeed, if leaf by leaf were seen

Our volume, here and there a page you'd find
Wherein to read 'I am as I have been.'

But these will not be of Casalè's mind,

Nor Acquasparta's, wherewith some the scroll 125
Discuss, who slacken, some who stricter bind.

For me, I am Bonaventura's soul

Of Bagnoregio, who did always in
Great works the minor interest control.

Illuminâto's here, and Augustin, 130

Who of the bare-foot meek welnigh before
All others girt himself, God's praise to win.

Here by their side are *Hugo St. Victor*,

Peter Hispanus, who to th' eyes of man
Shines in twelve volumes, Peter Mangiador, 135

Nathan the Seer, the Metropolitan

Chrysostomus, Anselmus, Cælius,
Who deigned the earliest of arts to scan,

Rabanus, and next me, Joachimus,

Calabrian Abbot, who with prophecy 140
Was gifted; I with language emulous

Was moved with such a paladin to vie

By the choice diction and warm courtesie
Of Brother Thomas, and not only I,

But with me roused was all this companie.” 145

And let one ring the other's beams enclose,
And let them both revolve in such a guise,
That forward these may turn, and backward those.
And you'll the shadow have before your eyes
Of the true dance and double constellation, 20
That did the place, in which I stood, comprise.
For truly as the rapidest heaven's rotation
Outstrips the gliding of La Chiâna, so
Exceeded these things all our observation.
They sang not Pæan there, nor Evæ, no, 25
But how three persons in God's nature meet,
And this and man's into one person flow.
Now was the measure and the song complete,
And all on us these holy lights intent
Were blest, in changing care to care as sweet. 30
The silence of the Gods consentient
Was broken by the Light, that in applause
Of God's meek servant wondrous words had spent,
Who said, " Since one is winnowed of the straws,
Since in the garner is bestowed the grain, 35
To beat that second one sweet love me draws.

Thou deem'st, that in the bosom, whence was ta'en
That rib, of which was wrought the cheek so clear,
Whose palate was to all the world a bane,
And eke in that, which traversed by the spear, 40
And after, and before, made recompense,
By which to be atoned no fault is dear,
All light, that falls within the competence
Of human nature to receive, was shed
By their joint Maker's power and excellence. 45
And hence thou marvellest at what I said,
Declaring, that the gift in yonder light,
The fifth in place, was unattended.
Now on my answer fix thy mind aright,
And see, how in the truth my words and thy 50
Belief, like rays in centre, shall unite :
All mortal things, and all, that cannot die,
Are only Splendors of the Thought divine,
Whom, loving, bringeth forth our Parent high.
That living light, that from his glow doth shine, 55
Dilating, and that ne'er can be undone
From him, and from the Love, that makes them trine,

In bounty causes that its rays should run

Together, mirrored-like, on beings new,
Itself eternally remaining One.

60

This to the last creative agents through

Grade after grade so tempered maketh way,
That only small and maimed results ensue,
Contingencies, and let the term convey

All generated things, that or by seeds,
Or seedless, heaven produces by its sway.

65

Of these the matter, and the craft that kneads,
Are not alike ; hence more or less behind
The ideal standard each effect recedes.

'Tis hence, that out of trees alike in kind

70

Comes worse or better fruit, and even so
Are men born, matched unequally in mind.
If tempered perfectly the wax should flow,

And heaven's fairest influence partake,
The Prototype would all its glory show.

75

But therein Nature cannot else than make

A diminution, as the craftsman might
Who mastery hath of art, and hands that quake.

And hence, if Fire of Love the all-clear Light
Of Power creative hath disposed and swayed, 80
There all perfection needs must find a site.
So rendered meet was Earth to be arrayed
With forms of perfect life through glade and
fen,
So was to be with Child the Virgin made.
And therefore I commend thy verdict, when 85
Thou deemest, Nature never was before,
Nor shall be after, as in these two men.
Now then, if I should say to thee no more
Thy next first words, 'How could this other
stand
Without a rival,' would no doubt explore. 90
And therefore, that the secret may be scanned,
Consider, who he was, and what the thing,
When God said ask, that guided his demand.
Enough is said, to show thee, that a King
He was, who for this purpose Wisdom sought, 95
That fitted he might be for governing,

Not, of these heavenly Movers to be taught

The number, not to know, if out of Must
And Mayhap ever can a Must be brought ;

Not ' Motum primum dare ' if 'tis just, 100

Not if in circumscribing demi-round
A Trigon, not right-angled, can be thrust.

If this thou mark, and what I else propound,

Lo, Royal Prudence was that non-pareil
Sight, whereto my discourse's march was bound. 105

And the word ' ris'n ' if thou remarkest well,

It bears on kings alone, thou wilt perceive,
Of whom are many, and few the good to tell.
Do thou, distinguishing, these words receive,

And, touching our first Parent and our Joy, 110
They will consist with all thou dost believe.

And this like lead about thy feet employ,

That slowly they may trudge to Yes or No,
In things thou seest not, like a wayworn boy.
For sure amongst all fools he ranketh low, 115

Who aught, without distinguishing, denies,
Or vouches, to whatever texts he go.

III.

H

For oft in quickly-formed opinion lies

An oversight, which taketh Falsehood's part,
And then our judgement predilection ties. 120

And worse than vainly from the coast depart

(For they return not as they went on board)
They that would fish for Truth, and lack the art.
And hereof let Parmenides afford

Proof, and Melissos, Bryso, and many schools, 125
Who rusht, and knew not what they hurry tow'rd.
So did Sabellus, Arius, all the fools,

That have been mangling swords to Holy Writ,
In turning well-set faces from its rules.

And let not folk in judging trust their wit 130

Too fast, as one who counteth up the corn
In 's field before the Sun has ripened it;
For I have all through winter seen a thorn

Appearing foisonless and obdurate,
Which then the rose upon the sprig hath borne: 135

And I have seen a ship, that swift and straight

Has run upon the midsea all her race,
And perished, entering at the harbor gate.

Let not squire Timothy and mistress Grace,
Because they see one filch, another pray, 140
Suppose, they see them as before God's face ;
For he may rise, and he may fall away."

CANTO XIV.

FROM rim to center, and from center out

To rim, the water vibrates in a bowl,
As from within 'tis stricken, or without.

This thing, I speak of, made a sudden roll

Upon my mind, at hearing to its close 5
The speech of Thomas his triumphant soul,
By reason of the likeness which arose

Between his words and those of Beatris,
Who next him thus to speak in bounty chose.

"There is another truth, of which to miss 10

The root he would be loth, although he saith
Nought yet, by tongue, nor in his thoughts of this.
Tell him—the light, which overblossometh

Your substance, hath it to remain with you
Through all eternity, as now it doth? 15

And if it so remaineth, tell him too,

How shall your eyes not be discomfited,
When you corporeal have been made anew ? ”
As, by new sudden gladness urged and sped,

I have seen all that in the dance careered, 20
Lifting their voice, and blither in their tread,
So when the warm, free-hearted prayer they heard,

Began those hallowed rings new joy to show,
In both the lilting, and the melody weird.
What man complaineth, we must die below 25

To live exalted there? he ill perceiveth
The balm of th’ everlasting overflow.
That One and Two and Three, who always liveth,

And reigneth always in Three, Two and One,
Limitless, and to all their limits giveth, 30
Was sungen thrice among the spirits, none

Abstaining, uttering such melodiousness,
As might have recompenst all good works done.
And from the light divinest in the less

Of those two rings a modest voice, may be 35
As was that Angel’s, who did Mary bless,

Began, " As long time as the jubilee

Of Paradise shall last, our love shall make

So long its vesture of this radiancy.

Our brightness from our heat, our heat shall take 40

Proportion from our insight, this from grace

Which each above his merit shall partake.

Our person shall be dearer in God's face

From its rebuilding, when the glorious

And hallowed body it shall re-embrace. 45

Thence will increase the light gratuitous,

That Sovran Goodness will on us bestow,

Light, which on Him to look empowereth us ;

And thereby shall our insight greater grow,

So shall the ardor, which is thereby lit, 50

So shall the rays, that from this ardor flow.

But as you see the brands, that flame emit

Around them, and their own distinctness hold

From their keen whiteness overpowering it,

So must the light, which doth us now enfold, 55

Be past in glory by those bodies bright,

The same that, late and early, mix with mould.

Nor shall we be fatigued by so much light,
For strong the organs of the new-made men
Shall wax, to bear all workings of delight." 60
So prompt and eager both the rings were then,
That well they seemed to cherish true desires
For their cold bodies, when they called Amen,
Perhaps not for themselves, but for their Sires,
Their mothers, and for all that had been dear, 65
Or ever they became perpetual fires.
And lo ! another brightness 'gan appear
Around us, whence the former doubled grew,
As when the horizon shall be waxing clear.
And as our heaven at evening fall the new 70
Appearances beginneth to disclose,
When that, which seemeth, hardly seemeth true,
So there new beings on my prospect rose,
Methought, and round the first circumference
And second seemed a circle to compose. 75
O very blaze o' th' holiest Effluence !
How rapid, and how furnace-white its glare
Upon the quailing windows of my sense !

But Beatris, so beaming and so fair

She met me, that untold the sight must be 80

With more, that never memory can repair.

And thence mine eyes regained ability

To lift themselves up, and I found me fled

Alone to loftier bliss with my Ladye.

I well discerned, that I was higher sped, 85

From the star's beaming with the tint of flame,

And quite, methought, beyond his custom red.

With all my heart, and language that the same

In all mankind is, unto God I made

Whole offering, such as the new grace became. 90

And ere the sacrifices's heat could fade

From all my bosom, I had cause to know,

That welcomed and accepted thanks I paid:

For such a radiant, such a crimson glow

Of lights appeared to me in twofold lines, 95

That "O the Sun," I cried, "who pranks them so."

As pattern'd with great lights and smaller shines

Between the poles of heaven the Milky Way,

That men of wisdom to much doubt inclines,

So constellated here did ray with ray 100

In Mars his heart that hallowed sign compose,
That quadrants joined upon a ring display.

My memory here my utterance outgoes,

For blazoned on that Cross beheld I Christ,
Such as I find no type that fitly shows. 105

But whoso takes his Cross, and follows Christ,

May well excuse me that, I leave untried,
When lightening on that Rood he seeth Christ.

'Twixt base and summit, and from side to side,

Were moving lights, which flasht in keener sort 110

To those they met, and those they past beside,

As particles we see, some long, some short,

Some slow, some rapid, always fresh arrayed,

A-moving, some directly, some athwart,

Upon the sunbeam, that divides the shade, 115

Which people to defend themselves, by fruit
Of workmanship and industry, have made.

And as from timely touch of harp and lute

On many chords a tinkling sweet is heard
By those who keep not with their tune afoot, 120

So sounded from the lights, which there appeared,
Through all the Cross a melody gathering in,
That ravished me, distinguishing no word.

Well could I learn, high praises were therein ;

For unto me there came, as one whose ear, 125
Not mind receives it, " Rise thou up and win."

This it so much enamored me to hear,

That nought which I had met before this date
So sweetly to embind me did appear.

My words may seem too bold, to underrate 130

The pleasure from those beautifullest eyes,
To look on which doth all my wants amate.

But he, who marks, that heaven's living dyes

Act best in highest place on all fair hues,
And that I had not there beheld those eyes, 135

May well excuse me, that which I accuse

To vindicate, and of my truth be sure,
For nought do I that holy pleasure's dues

Withhold, since mounting up it grows more pure.

CANTO XV.

BOUNTY, that dew to which resolves itself

Affection, where it uncorrupted rose,
As doth th' unrighteous into love of pelf,
Did stillness on that luscious lyre impose,

And every sacred chord it quieted, 5

Which slack or tense in th' hand of Heaven grows.

How hardly shall one righteous prayer be said

In vain to beings, who for this alone
That I might ask them, were to silence led.

Well merit they to make perpetual moan, 10

Who for affection unto aught that dies
Within the bounds of Time, such Love disown.
As through the limpid and hushed evening skies

May dart a sudden fire before our face,
That makes to flinch the unregarding eyes, 15

And seems a star removing from its place,

Except that nothing, where it catches light
Is lost, and it remains but little space,

So from the arm, that stretches to the right,

Down to this Cross'es foot, there ran a star 20
From off the figure, which here burneth bright.
Nor from its setting went the gem out far

Or near, but o'er the radial lines it wheeled,
Lustrous, like fire through alabaster jar.

Such tenderness Anchises' shade revealed, 25

If our high muse's word for Truth may pass,
His son perceiving in th' Elysian field.

"Myne ownè blode! ah riche outpoured grace!

To whome of mennès children hath the gate
Of heven twyse opned bene, as in thy caas?" 30

So spake this brightness, whom to contemplate

I turned, then on my lady, and surprise
I drew from each of overpowering weight.

For such a fire was radiant in her eyes,

That mine, methought, had reached the farthest
bound 35

Of God's indulgence, and my paradise.

Again that spirit, blithe in mien and sound,

Linked words upon the former, whereof nought
I understood; their aim was too profound;

Nor that obscurity by choice he sought, 40

But took perforce, because above the norm
Of human understanding soared his thought.

But when the bow of that affection warm

Was so dischargèd, that his speech descended
Enough with our perceptions to conform, 45

The words of his, that first I comprehended,

Were, "Ever be thou blest, O Three and One,
Who in my lineage hast so condescended ;"

And next, "A long and dear desire, O Son,

That came by reading in that volume vast, 50
Where blank or letter done was ne'er undone,
Within the light, that speaks to thee, thou hast

Concluded; therefore ever thank't be she,
Who donned thee plumes for such a flight to last.
Thou thinkest, that thy thought derives to me 55

From that, which is the first, as four or five
Radiates from cognizance of unity.

Hence what I am, and wherefore I arrive

More joyous, thou dost not enquire, than all
My comrades near thee in the mirth-rich hive. 60

And rightly dost thou think, for great and small
Who live with us, that mirror's sight partake,
Where thy thought's copies, ere thou thinkest, fall.
But that the sacred love, in which I wake

With eyes still-opened, and which makes me thirst
In sweet desiring, I may better slake, 66

Let now thy want, thy longing be rehearst

In confident and bold and blithesome key,
To which my answer is determined erst."

I turned me unto Beatris, and she 70

Heard ere I asked, and smiled me such assent
As in the wings of will replumaged me.

And I began, "Your skill and your intent,

Since the first Equal it was yours to greet,
In counterpoising weights to each are lent. 75

Because so equal are the light and heat

I' th' Sun, that warmeth and enlighteneth you,
That all comparisons are incomplete.

But Will and Skill in that which mortals do,
For such good reason as to you is clear, 80
Are hawks that with unequal wings pursue.
In this unequalness I must appear
As mortal, and do hence no thanks recite
Save in my heart to thy parental cheer.
I therefore pray thee, living chrysolite, 85
Who such a costly jewel doth engem,
Grant me, by knowledge of thy name, delight."
"Dear branch of mine," began his answer then,
"In whom I joyed while only waiting till
I might behold thee, lo, I was thy stem. 90
One, who a hundred years and more yon Hill
In the first range hath circled, to thy line
Gave that appellative it beareth still.
Among thy fathers he was third, and mine
Own offspring ; the long toil he had to taste 95
Might well be shortened by good works of thine.
Florence, within that ancient boundary placed,
From which she taketh matin hours and noon,
Abode in peace yet, sober and shamefaced.

No crownets, and no tinsel'd ladies' shoon, 100
No chains, no girdles of such costliness
As oft the claims of person might impugn.
Not yet did every daughter's birth distress
Her father, for the dower and nubile age
Not yet eschewed the mean for more and less. 105
No mansion yet was made a hermitage ;
Not yet was by Sardanapalus shown
What wars a Man may in the chamber wage.
Nor yet had Montemâlo been outflown
By your Uccelatoi', which shall surpass 110
In being, swiftly as it rose, o'erthrown.
I've seen Bellincion Bêrti girded pass
With bone and leather, and his lady fair
Depart unpainted from her looking glass.
I've seen the Nêrlis' and the Vecchio's Heir 115
In bull-hide, and their ladies to endure
To ply the needle and the yarn prepare.
O fortunates, and every she was sure
Of decent burial, and to leave her bed
No Frankish commerce could the bridegroom lure! 120

Then one, a-watching by the cradle's head,
I th' language, that to parents giveth joy
As soon as heard, things comfortable said ;
And one with flax and spindle would employ
Her fingers, and amongst her maidens tell a 125
Tale of the Romans, Fesulæ, or Troy.
As great a marvel Lupo Salterello
Would then have been as Cincinnatus now,
And as Cornelia would have been Cianghella.
To a civic life thou seest how goodly, how 130
Reposeful, fellow citizens how leal,
How sweet a homestead, Mary, with loud vow
Solicited, gave me, and of Christ the seal
I took within your ancient Baptistere,
As Caçciaguida for his Commonweal. 135
Moronto, Eliseo, my brothers were ;
My lady from the Vale of Po I brought,
Of whom thy name deriveth, Alighier.
The Camp of Emperor Conrad then I sought,
And by him was I girded for his knight, 140
So well I pleased him, for I bravely wrought.

I followed him, yon wicked faith to fight,

Whose votaries by your Shepherd's fault despoil
Your Jurisdiction of its native right.

By this unholy people from the coil

145

Of the false world obtained I my release,
(Ah World, whose love doth many a spirit soil,)
And entered out of Martyrdom this Peace.

CANTO XVI.

O PIGMY nobleness of earthly lines !

If people needs must glory in thy sense
Below, where our unsound affection pines,
No wonder thereto will I more dispense,

For in that heaven, where appetite astray 5
Is never to be drawn, I gloried hence.

In truth thy mantle quickly doth decay—

Time goes around it with diminishing shears,
Except we piece new cloth on, day by day.
That plural You commenced my words, which ears 10

Of Romans have been foremost to abide,
And which to use her clan least perseveres.
Whence Beatris, who stood not far aside,

In smiling at me seemed like her who cought
At the first fault we read of Arthur's bride. 15

"You are," I said, "my father ; you aloft

So raise me, that above myself I grow,

Toward you my speech all fearfulness hath doft.

So many streams of joyance overflow

My mind, that farther I delight herein, 20

That it succumbs not, and upbears them so.

Now tell me then, dear founder of my kin,

What ancestors were yours, what years are gone
Since those that saw your infancy begin?

Tell me about the sheepfold of St. John, 25

What numbers owned it, and in heavenly height
Who were among them worthiest of a throne?"

As from the breathing of the wind more bright

A crimson o'er the burning charcoal flies,

So beamed at my love's utterance this light. 30

And as he met more beautiful mine eyes,

So with more amiable a voice and sweet,

He answered, though not in this modern guise,

And, "from the day," said he, "that heard Heaven
greet

The Virgin, to the lightening of her womb 35

Who bare me, and hath now with Saints a seat,

Had entered in her native Lion's home

Five hundred times and fourscore times this flame,
Beneath his feet her ardors to relume.

My parents and I too from that part came 40

In which begins the Sextum, whereto reach
The runners latest in your annual game.

So much about my ancestors to teach

Sufficeth ; as to whence, and who they were,
More comely shall be reticence than speech. 45

All, who between Mars and the Baptist were

To carry weapons able, not one man
To five would make for those now living there.

But then within the meanest artisan

Our civic blood, unblent with Certaldese, 50
Or with the Campian, or Figghînish, ran.

O how much better to keep such as these

Your outdoor neighbors, and by Trespiân
Or by Gallûzzo set your boundaries,
Than to comprise them, and endure a spawn 55

Like Aguglionè's and La Signa's hind,
Whose eyes for truckling always are indrawn.

If that race, which hath most on earth declined,
 Had unto Cæsar not the step-dame played,
But been, like mother to her offspring, kind, 60
There's many a Florentine can truck and trade,
 Who might have now gone back to Simifonti,
There, where his ancestor the rounds hath made.
Then Montemûrlo's lords might be the Conti,
 Acône's parish might the Cêrchi bound, 65
Yea, Valdigrêve haply the Buondelmonti.
In merging nationalities the ground
 At all times lay, when nations could not thrive,
As meats ill mixed the bodily health confound.
And sightless bulls to heavier downfall drive 70
 Than lambs that are so, and one rapier can
Cut often more, and cleaner than the five.
If thou dost Luni and Urbisaglia scan,
 How they have dwindled, and now Clusium hies
With Sinigaglia down the road they ran, 75
To hear, how from the world one lineage dies,
 Thou wilt for nothing new or wondrous treat,
For mother-cities reach their term likewise.

All your belongings are of Death the meat,
As you are, but in some 't will not appear, 80
Since long their lasting, and your lives are fleet.
Look, how the rolling of the Moon her Sphere
Skarfs and unskarfs the stronds without repose;
So Florence in vicissitudes doth veer.
Thou shouldst not wonder then, when I disclose 85
The doings of these ancient Florentines,
Upon whose fame now Time his cover throws.
I saw the Ughis, and the Catellines,
Filippis, Ormans, Grecis, Alberîcs,
Waning already, civic illustrious lines. 90
And I have seen, as prosperous as antique,
Sannella's house, and that of Soldanier,
The Arcas, and Ardinghis and Bostîcs.
Above the gates, which now the burthen bear
Of treasons new-concocted, so immense, 95
That soon the barks to lighten you'll prepare,
Dwelt Ravignânis, where his residence
Count Guido left, with all men that have ta'en
The glorious Bellincionè's name sithence.

Then Della Pressa knew how Heaven would reign 100

By Cæsar, and our Galigâyo's state.

Then did the gilded haft and hilt maintain.

Still was the Column of the ermines great,

The Giochis, Gallis, Sifantis, Baruçcis,

Sacchettis, and the clan which bears the stain · 105

Of measures falsified, and your Calfuçcis

Their older stock yet flourished, and to Chairs

Curule were Siziis brought, and Arriguçcis.

How great I saw the house, that meanly fares

Now from their pride, and aye the balls of gold 110

Led Florence flourishing in her grand affairs.

Thus wrought the fathers in the days of old

Of those who, when your Church a pastor lacks,

Grow corpulent, and consistories hold.

That overweening race, who at the backs 115

Of fugitives are dragons, lambs to all '

That show their teeth, or offer them their tax,

Already entered, but with menay small ;

And much misliked it Ubertain Donâto

Through his belsire his kinsman them to call. 120

Already had Caponsacco to Mercâto

Come down from Fesulæ, already leal
Burghers were Giúda, but and Infangâto.

A true and wondrous thing I'll not conceal ; 124

They reached the smaller Precincts, where the gate
Bore Della Pêra's name, unblamed by zeal.

All, who in the fair crest participate

Of the great paramount, whose name and praise
The festivals of Thomas reinstate,

Derived of him their martial rank and bays, 130

Though now the people's side hath many got,
Who in their quarterings the same emblaze.

The Importûno and the Gualterot

Already throve, and Borgo yet might be
More tranquil, if new neighbors it had not. 135

The house that sorrows made you first to see,

By the just vengeance, that hath you destroyed,
And ended all your life of harmony,

That house with its allies fair fame enjoyed !

O Buondelmonte, why didst thou, beset 140
By others' instances, that league avoid ?

There's many a mourner would be jocund yet,
Had God vouchsafed thee to the Naiad's bed,
That day, when first in town thy feet were set. 144
Yon battered stone *, that guards the bridge's head,
Would still on Florence for a victim seize,
Before his grudging could be quieted.
Among these clans, and many more like these,
I have known Florence in such happy chance,
As one who cause for weeping never sees. 150
I've seen her people under these advance
So good and glorious, that the fleur-de-lis
Had never been reversed upon the lance,
Nor scarlet-dyed by civic enmities.

* The "Mars" of line 46.; v. Inf. 13. 143.

CANTO XVII.

As came for reassurance from his ill

Report, which he had heard, to Clymenè
One *, who to sons makes fathers chary still,
So stood I minded ; so was felt to be

By Beatris, and by that sacred fire, 5
Who shifted at the first his place for me.
“Allow,” she said, “the flare of thy desire

To find its issue, so that moulded well
By thy internal man, it may suspire ;
Not that thy speaking may our knowledge swell, 10

Nay, but that thou mayst practice win hereby,
When men should pour thee out, thy thirst to tell.”

* Phæton.

"O dear my root, who lifted art so high,

That just as mortal minds the trigon see,
How therein two right angles cannot lie, 15
So thou discernest all contingency,

Ere it be fact, upon that point intent
Where present are all tenses of *To Be* ;
Whilst I, accompanying Virgil, went,

That mountain climbing, which doth spirits heal, 20
And through the lack-life world in my descent,
Things have been told me 'gainst my future weal

Of sound ungrateful, though against the blows
Of fortune I foursquare enow may feel.
This therefore to my wish would give repose, 25

If thou my fortunes toldest, that draw near,
For feeble falls the shaft a man foreknows."
So spake I to that very light, which here

Had spoken to me first, and in the way
That Beatris willed, I made my wishes clear. 30
And by no coils of words (which in their day

Ensnared the foolish nations, ere was slain
That Lamb of God, who taketh sins away ;)

But with our native diction, terse and plain,
 With his own smile enlopt and displayed, 35
This love parental answered me again.
“Contingency, whose tenor doth pervade
 That world alone, the object of your sense,
Lies all before th’ Eternal Mind portrayed.
Yet no necessity derives it hence, 40
 More than on barks, that down some river fleet,
The eye, that mirrors them, gains influence.
Therefrom, as wins upon our ear a sweet
 Effect from instruments harmonious,
So steals thy future life on my conceit. 45
As out from Athens went Hippolytus,
 (For so his false and bitter stepdame wrought,)
Beyond thy Florence must thou wander thus.
This thing is willed, this thing’s already sought,
 This thing its plotter soon will compass there 50
Where Christ is, late and early, sold and bought —
The injured side the ill report shall bear
 By course of custom, but the avenging wo
That Truth, which her dispenseth, shall declare.

Thou shalt leave all things, which thou long ago 55

Hast loved most dearly, and I've herein said
What dart is soonest shot from exile's bow.

Thou shalt experience, how another's bread

Is salt upon our palate, and what bale
'Tis up and down another's stairs to tread. 60

But that, which most will make thy shoulders ail,

Will be the ribald, the malevolent horde,
With whom thou shalt descend in yonder dale,
Who all quite thankless, brainless, godless, tow'rd

Thee will display themselves, yet shortly thou, 65
Not they, will carry off their temples gored.

Their brutish folly shall th' event display,

So far, that lustre hereby mayst thou win,
That thou a party by thyself dost stay.

Thy first asylum, and thy first fair Inn 70

Shall be the bounties of yon Lombard great,
Whose crest's the ladder, and God's bird therein.

Whose favors on thee shall so largely wait,

That of two things, to grant and to request,
Shall that be earliest, which is elsewhere late. 75

With whom thou shalt see him, that was imprest

So well, at birth-hour, by this planet bold,
That great achievements will his worth attest ;

Whom yet the world in due account to hold

Is not accustomed, seeing that for nine 80
Years only have these orbs about him rolled.

But ere the Gascon's fraud shall undermine

Great Henry, sparkles of his virtues will
Spring out, in spurning toils, and riches' shine.

The fame of his magnificence shall fill 85

So wide the country, that his very foes
Shall not have power their tongues thereon to still.

On him do thou, and on his grace repose,

By him will many persons change their place,
And poor will these become, and lordly those. 90

This record of him in thy memory trace,

Yet publish not ;" and herewith told he me
Things past believing by this present race.

"These are the glosses, O my son," said he,

"Of that which thou hast heard ; behind a few 95
Sun's periods are those nets prepared for thee —

I would not have thee thence thy neighbors view

With envy, for thy lifetime hath to last
Much more, than till their perfidies they rue."

This word the blessed Spirit made his last, 100

Appearing of the warp to make an end,
Which in the loom, that I had laid, he cast.

And I, like one who longeth to commend

His doubts to whom he knoweth to be wise,
And honorably-minded, and his friend, 105

Began, "I see, dear father, how time hies

To meet me, for an onslaught, which may quell
Him best, who least on the defensive lies.

With foresight therefore I must arm me well,

Lest, while I lose my dearest home of all, 110
My rhymes prohibit me to elsewhere dwell.

In the world under of perpetual gall,

And on the mountain, where my lovely queen
Her beams upraised me from yon earthly ball,
And afterwards, from star to star-home sheen 115

In heaven, of diverse things have I been told
That must for many taste of wormwood keen.

And if by truth I timorously hold,
I fear to lose my repute in the days,
To which our own shall be the days of old." 120
The light, from which my treasure laughed his rays,
(Whom here I found), more brightly 'gan to beam,
Like the gold mirror in the sun's full blaze,
And answered, "Unto consciences, which teem
With apprehensions for their own good fame, 125
Or other men's, thy word may churlish seem.
But nathless, putting from thee all bad shame,
Make thou thy Vision wholly manifest,
And let them wince, that galled are by the same.
For if thy voice their palate shall molest 130
At first, yet vital nourishment their mind
Shall afterwards derive, when they digest.
Thy proclamation shall be like the wind,
By which the tops most lofty most are blown,
But herein matter of much praise wilt find. 135
And therefore only spirits famed and known,
Both in these roundures, and the dolorous glade,
And in the mountain, have to thee been shown,

Because the reader's mind will not be stayed,

Nor in faith planted by examples ta'en

140

From subjects mean, or rooted in the shade,

Nor by no topic, which is else than plain."

CANTO XVIII.

Now was alone enjoying his heart's word

That blessed Spirit, and on mine I fed,
Softening the bitter by the sweet things heard.
And the bright Lady, who to God me led,

"Turn to thoughts better, think how I am near 5
To Him, who lighteneth every wrong," she said.
Soon at the loving sound of mine heart's cheer

I turned me, and how much of love I met
I' th' eyes of holiness, I write not here,
Not dreading only, on my style to set 10

Too great a burthen, but that Memory may
Thus high return not, but if grace she get.
So much about that moment I can say,

That, whilst I gazed upon her, all save this
Desire had mine affections ceased to sway, 15

Whilst the delight eterne, from Beatris

Her glorious aspect full upon me thrown,
At our looks newly meeting, gave me bliss.

Afresh her dazzling smile upon me shone,

And "turn," she said, "and hark ; 't is not within 20
Mine eyes that Paradise is found alone."

As aspect oft, in creatures of our kin,

Displays the feeling, should it force acquire
So great, that all our soul is rapt therein,

Thus in the flaring of that sacred fire 25

Whom turning I encountered, I could see
That more to teach me was his heart's desire.

"In this fifth landing here," bespoke he me,

"Of this our downwards-nourisht, and our never-
Leaf-dropping, but perpetual-fruitful tree, 30

Are blessed spirits dwelling, which, or ever

They clombe to heaven, had won them wide spread
fame,

Ennobling for all Muses to endeavor.

Watch then the Cross'es arms, and when I name

A spirit, whomsoe'er, thou 'lt see him do 35
The like, as doth in cloud the rapidest flame."

Then saw I one, whom through the Cross he drew
By naming Joshua, and at once the word
I noted, and the deed before my view.
So next the Maccabee's high sound I heard, 40
And saw a splendor, that revolved and ran,
Whose whirling cone the lash of transport stirred.
So too for Roland and for Charlemagne
Two lights my earnest gaze pursued, as far
As fowler's eye the new-flown hawk may scan. 45
William of Orange then, and *Rénouard*,
And *Godfrey de Bouillon* my looks along
The cross attracted, and *Robert Guiscard*.
Then, moved and mingled in the general throng,
The light, who spoke to me before, displayed 50
His rank i' th' artists of celestial song.
I turned me to my right hand, and I laid
My looks on Beatris, my duty deeming
That I should learn, by signs or words conveyed.
I saw so blithe and golden of their beaming 55
Her eyes, that therewith she surpast outright
Her latest, much more every former seeming.

And as by doing well with more delight

Day after day, a man becomes aware
His virtue waxeth toward her perfect height, 60
So I perceived, that my revolving there

With heaven a larger arc began to trace,
Finding that marvel of God's hand more fair.

And as the change, that cometh in the space
Of moments over lily damsels, when 65

They drop the load of blushing from their face,
So, when I turned me, rose upon my ken

The whiteness, and the cooler tempered shine,
Of the sixth planet, which received us then.
I saw the sparklings of the love divine, 70

That overspread this beacon light of Jove,
Before mine eyes our language to design.

And as the birds, uprising from the cove,

As making merry, where they pastured well,
Now round, now oval in their squadron move, 75

So sang and flew things hallowed in the shell

Of each his brightness, and in order made
By their positions D and I and L.

Their melodies first singing out they strayed,

Then as they formed one letter of the three, 80
Awhile in silence and unmoved they stayed.

O thou Parnassian Queen, that gloriously

Dost minds exalt, and with long ages dower,
As they do cities, but and realms, by thee,
Irradiate me, that as my mind this hour 85

Retains their patterns, I may carve them yet ;
Put in these narrow verses forth thy power.

The consonants and vowels then that met

My view were five and thirty, and as fast
I noted each, as 't was before me set. 90

DILIGITE JUSTITIAM * first came past,

A noun and verb of all the sentence told,
QUI JUDICATIS TERRAM † followed last ;

Then in the M of that last word enrolled

They halted, making Jupiter to seem 95
A disc of silver interwrought with gold.

* Love Justice.

† Ye that are Judges of the Earth.

I saw then other lights descending stream

Where pointed was the M, and rest there, singing
Of the good Lord, who moved them, as I deem.

And as innumerable sparks the flinging 100

Of burning brands produces, oft to those
Whose minds are shallow, fancied omens bringing,
I saw above a thousand lights, which rose

In consort, and moved outward less and more,
As bade the Sun, whence each enkindled glows. 105
And after each was stationed, and forbore

To move, the likeness of an Eagle's head
And neck methought that fire pictorial bore.
The Artist there is by no copies led—

All art He guideth, and by Him imprest 110
Is Nature's cunning, where the fowls are bred.
Next the remaining numbers of the Blest,

Who made their lily pastures in the M,
Scarce moving, joined the pattern with the rest.
Star of delight! how many a lovely gem 115

Showed in thee, Justice hath its origins
Amongst us in the Sphere thou dost begem.

And hence on yonder Sun, with whom begins
Thy power and motion, to look down I call
Upon the smoke, which thy fair light bedims, 120
That once more may His indignation fall

On those, who in that Temple sell and buy,
Which miracles and martyrdoms enwall.
Entreat, O Camp of Heaven, to whom I cry,
Entreat for all those upon Earth, who run 125
Behind exempl'd Wickedness awry.

It was by swords the work of War was done,
But now 't is by withholding, left and right,
That Bread the pitying Father shuts from none.
But thou, that only to annul dost write, 130

Beware, since Paul and Peter live, who bled
For the same vine, which thou despoil'st outright.
Ha! thou wilt answer, I've so riveted

My love on him, who chose to dwell alone,
And for a dancer's flings to Death was led*, 135
That nor the Fisherman, nor Paul, I've known.

See "Inferno, 30. 74.

CANTO XIX.

BEFORE me now appeared with wings outspread
That goodly symbol, which in sweet delight
Beatified the souls engarlanded;
Each one appeared a ruby, that so bright
Was kindled by the sun's incursive ray, 5
That back it glinted him upon my sight.
And that, which it behoves me now to say,
Was never aired on voice, nor inkt on sheet,
Nor hath man's fancy entered ere this day.
For I beheld, I heard, that beak repeat, 10
And frame articulately, I and My,
Where We and Our, as I conceived, were meet.
"For being just," it said, "and pious I
Am dwelling here exalted in such glory,
As with itself forbids desire to vie. 15

And my renown shall not be transitory

On Earth, although the Nations lewdly bent
Applaud, and take not pattern by the story."

As out of many flames one heat is sent,

So did I from that emblem hear to peal 20
One voice of many a loving ardor blent.

"O flowers unwithering of perpetual weal,"

Thus I began soon after, "who as one
Do make me all your balmy odours feel,
Cause by your breathing that I may have done 25

With that great fast, which long hath made me pine,
Since food on earth I have yet found it none.

Well know I, that if Righteousness divine

Her mirror maketh of one realm in heaven,
Then yours beholds her not with filmier eyne. 30

You know, with what attention I am given

To listening, you do understand the doubt,
That with my thirst for knowledge long hath striven."

As from his hood the falcon cometh out

With brandisht head and self-applauding wings, 35
Mustering his beauties, and his courage stout,

So saw I move that emblem, which from strings
Of God his praise is woven, with such sound
As he but knows whom God to joy there brings.
Then spake it, "He who turned the compass round
This universe, and of such numberless 41
Things manifest and secret set the bound,
Could not upon the World his might impress
So fully, that his Word should all beside
Not overweigh with infinite excess. 45
This makes it certain, that the Son of Pride,
Who of created Beings had no peers,
Fell soon, because for light he would not bide.
And every smaller Nature hence appears
To be a scant receiver of that Good, 50
Boundless, whereof none else are measurers.
Our Insights therefore, since perforce they could
Be nought except some glintings of the Mind,
By which all things existent are embued,
Could by their Natures not be so divined, 55
That their Beginner to be far more great
Than that which he appears, they should not find :

The Intuitions, therefore, which your state

Receives of Justice her perpetual reign,

Serve but as eyes, the sea to penetrate. 60

For though to scan its bottom you attain

Off shore, far out you cannot ; still 'tis there,

Though hindered by pure depth from being plain.

Ye have no light, unless from that sky fair

Which cannot be o'ercast ; all else is shade, 65

Or carnal vapors, which infections bear.

Enough is now that cavern open laid,

Which living Justice from thy view did sever,

Whereof such daily question thou hast made,

In saying, ' Such a one by Ganges-river 70

Is born, and there of Christ doth no man read,

Nor write, nor shall His name be mentioned ever.

And his good works and efforts shall be freed,

As far as human Judgement can perceive,

From sinfulness in both discourse and deed. 75

If faithless, unbaptized, the world he leave,

Where is the Justice, that condemns the man?

Where is the fault, if he doth not believe ?

And who art thou, that sitt'st, and mak'st a plan
Of Judgement for a thousand miles asunder, 80

Thy prospect being limited in a span?
In very faith, if Scripture kept not under

Your logic, he that now with me chicanes
Might find a cause for doubt, that merits wonder!
O animals terrestrial! O dull brains! 85

The First Will, by itself all perfect, quits
That Self at no time, which all Weal contains.
So much is Justice as thereunto fits ;

In Creatures is no good, towards which it hies,
But all such Good it causes and emits.' " 90
This ended, as the stork in circles flies

Above that nest, wherein she feeds her young,
And as those fed attend her with their eyes,
So moved, (and so mine eyes upon him clung,)

That figure blest, whose movement of each plume
Was on such numbers of free counsels hung. 96
Circling he chaunted, "As to thee, by whom

They are not understood, my notes be, so
To mortals is God's everlasting doom."

Then went on one and every flaming glow 100

Of God's own Spirit, in that sign enmailed,
Which made to Roman arms the World bend low.

"This kingdom," he began, "was never scaled

By mortal, that had not believed in Christ,
Before, or after, he on Cross was nailed. 105

But look, there's many calleth Christ, O Christ,

That shall for meeting Him in judgement want
Much more, than such a one as knew not Christ.

The Æthiop shall judge, and cry, Avaunt

Such Christians, when those congregations two 110
Part, one for Wealth eterne, and one for Want.

What shall your Kings be thought of by the Hindoo,

When by that opened volume he is placed,
Which bringeth all their obloquys to view ?

There 'mid the acts of Albert shall be traced 115

One, that will soon the Angel's pen employ,
And whence the realm of Praag shall be laid waste.
There shall be seen the grief, that by the alloy,

Mixed with his coin, along the Seine will breed
He, whom the swinish onset will destroy. 120

There shall be seen the pride, that worketh greed,

By which so mad are Scots and English grown,
That neither with their bounds can rest agreed.

There shall the silken and lewd life be shown

Of Spain's king, and Bohemia's, as of them 125
That virtue never yet have willed or known.

There shall the lame king of Jerusalem

His virtue with an I* be summed up clear,
And th' other side of his account with M.*

The avarice and poltroonery shall appear 130

Of him, who guardeth yonder fire-propt isle,
At which Anchises closed his long career ;
And that his meanness may in plainer style

Be shown, his record is in Shorthand framed,
That much will in but little space compile. 135

His Brother and his Uncle shall be shamed

There for that folly, which the nation great,
And the two diadems hath foully maimed.

There shall men learn, both Norway's king to rate

And Portugal's, and him, who falsely set 140
The stamp of Venice, Rhætia's potentate.

* Numerals.

O blessed Hungary, if none more she let

Misguide her, blest the frontier land of Spain,

If she could with her mountain shield her yet !

And for an earnest hereof may be ta'en, 145

That Famagost already and Nicosie *

Lament, and grudge against their Beast his reign,

For nought from others' footsteps parteth he."

* In Cyprus.

CANTO XX. "

WHEN he, that all illumines with his ray,
Beyond the boundary of our hemisphere
Sinks, and from all parts daylight ebbs away,
The heavens, that with him only glowed whilere,
By many a light, in which but shines one flame, 5
All unawares are made to reappear.
Into my thoughts this heavenly aspect came,
When silent in the blessed beak that sign
Of the world and her potentates became.
For all those living lights began to shine 10
Far brighter, and sang hymns, that fade and fleet
From my remembrance. O thou Love divine,
Who mak'st a mantle of thy smiling sweet,
How warm thou glowd'st in every fiery spring,
Whose flaming did but hallowed thoughts repeat. 15

Now when the gems, that made the enjewelling
Of the sixth planet, lustrous, well esteemed,
Had stinted from their angels carolling,
I heard a murmuring, as a brook, that seemed
By cliff and cliff with sparkling wave to drop, 20
From summits gleby, as might well be deemed.
Then, as the sound upon the cittern's top
Takes modulation, as the wind, that flows
Through a flute, is tempered by the fingered stop,
So, (shunning all e lays to interpose,) 25
That Eagles murmuring up along his throat,
As though it had been hollowed out, arose.
Thence it began to grow a voice, and float
Within the beak, and there such words it made,
As my heart waited, wherein them I wrote. 30
"The part which sees, and which without a shade
In mortal eagles bears the Sun," said he,
"Let now that part of mine be well surveyed.
For of the fires, that make this form in me,
Those, whence the eye is radiant in my head, 35
Are all the most exalted in degree.

He in the midmost, serving in the stead

Of pupil, was the Spirit's Menestrell,

By whom the Ark from town to town was led.

Now knoweth he, how far his Song was well 40

Deserving, as by purpose free controlled,

For therewith doth his recompense excell.

Among those five, who for mine eyelid hold

Their places round it, he is next my beak,

Who the poor widow for the Son consoled.* 45

Now knoweth he, how much they lose, who seek

Not their Redeemer, by the experience

Of blessed life, and of the baleful eke.

The next, continuing that circumference

Of which I speak, along the ascending curve, 50

Delayed his death hour by true penitence.†

Now knoweth he, God's judgements do not swerve

Out of their course eterne, though worthy prayer

To day's part for to morrow may reserve.

The next, by yielding to the Papal Chair 55

With good intention, that to harm reverted,

Grew Greek, and me and Law transplanted there.

* Purg. 6. 10.

† Isaiah, c. 38.

Now knoweth he, that goodness is exerted

Against herself no whit, though fruits derive,
Which have the welfare of the world subverted. 60

Next, as the arc descendeth, we arrive

At William, who is mourned for in the land,
That mourneth Charles and Frederic as alive.
Now knoweth he, how righteous kings are scanned

With love by heaven, and this too by the sight 65
Of his splendence others understand.

Is there in your much-erring world a wight,

That could the Trojan Ripheus in this round
Imagine, making our fifth hallowed light? 69

Now knows he, more than hath on earth been found

Respecting grace divine, though not comprising
In range of eye-sight yet its farthest bound."

As when the lark, aloft in wide air rising,

Sings first, and after pauses, fain to rest
On the last warbled sweetness all-suffising, 75

Such now this figure to me seemed, imprest

By that supernal Will, from whose decree
All things are in their native substance drest.

Therewith my doubt, although transpicuous he
Were in me, as through glass its mantling hue, 80
To pause in silence no whit suffered me,
But forced the words "What are these tidings" through
My lips, for on them he so strongly weighed ;
Then out the flashes of a great rapture flew.
Anon, with eye more brightly kindled, made 85
That blessed form his answer, lest I should
In marvelling suspense have longer stayed.
"I see, thou holdest my reports for good
As mine, but seest not how they can be so ;
Whence, if believed, they are not understood. 90
Thy case is that of those, who something know
By appellation, but that have no sense
Of what its being is, till others show.
The heavenly kingdom suffers violence
By ardent love, and by abounding hope, 95
Conquering the purpose of Omnipotence ;
Not as men conquer, when with men they cope,
But to be conquered because He is prone,
And, conquered, conquers for his bounty's scope.

The first and fifth life in the eyelid shown 100

Make thee to wonder, that thou shouldst have seen
Emblazoned by them the angelic zone.

They left their bodies, not as thou dost ween

In heathendom, but Christians, firm in trust
I th' feet, or to be cleft, or having been. 105

For One from Hell, in which to counsels just

Is no returning, came back, (to reward
Abounding hope,) where lay his bones in dust.
Abounding hope had put forth to the Lord

Her strength in prayer to raise him from the grave,
To where the Will has room to be restored. 111

The glorious Spirit, which our topic gave,

Restored to flesh, in which he stayed not long,
Believed in One, that power had him to save,
And burned, believing, in a fire so strong 115

Of soothfast love, that when death next befell,
He was found worthy of this festive throng.

The other Soul, by grace, that from a well

So deep goes out, that never creature yet
Could to the earliest wave his sight propel, 120

In earth his love on justice wholly set ;

So God from grace to grace unsealed his eye,
To know the ransom of our mortal debt ;
To whom he clove, and thenceforth to comply

With rotten paganism no longer bore, 125
But chode for it the nations led awry.

Those ladies three, whom thou beheld'st before

At the right wheel, were his baptizers, yea,
Ere baptism was a thousand years and more.
Predestination, O how far away 130

Are thy outgoings from what they suspect,
Who the first cause not all in all survey !
And do you mortals not too much affect

To judge, for even we, that God behold,
Know not yet all the number of the elect. 135
And dear we do this limitation hold,

For this advantage doth our weal refine,
That God doth in his will our wills enfold."

Thus was administered that medicine

Balmy, which man for shorter sight requires, 140
To me by that similitude divine.

And as some harpist good the swimming wires
Doth to accompany the good singer teach,
By which the minstrelsy more charm acquires,
So I remember, that throughout his speech 145
I witnessed those two spirits hallowèd,
As when our eyes are moving one and each,
To move their flamelets, as the words were said.

CANTO XXI.

Now were my eyes reanchored on the face,
 (And my heart likewise,) of my own ladye,
And all concernments else had yielded place.
This time she was not smiling, "but," said she,
 "Were I to smile, perforce thou wouldest fare 5
Like, when she sank in ashes, Semelè ;
Because my beauty, which doth everywhere,
 As thou perceivest, gather brighter glow,
Ascending up the eternal palace-stair,
If it were not attempered, blazeth so, 10
 That its effulgence thy terrestrial power,
As lightning splinters branches, would o'erthrow.
Now are we lifted to the seventh bright bower,
 Which from below the Lion's ardent breast
Doth mitigated influences shower. 15

Now let thine eyes be with thy mind address,

And in these mirror that similitude,

Which in this mirror will be manifest."

If one but knew the sweetness of the food

That blessed aspect ministered my sight, 20

(Toward a new object when I turned), he could,

How dear I counted this, have told aright,

(My own celestial guardian to obey,)

By measuring one against the next delight.

In that crystalline orb, which working way 25

Around our globe, is titled from its dear

Liege, who all malice quelled with his mild sway,

Colored as gold, on which a ray shall peer,

I saw a ladder raised erect on end,

So high, that of my sight it past the sphere. 30

Adown the steps whereof I saw descend

So many lights, I fancied every lamp,

Which shows itself in heaven, must therewith wend.

And as by instincts natural a camp

Of choughs, as day's approaches they discern, 35

Bestir themselves to warm their pinions damp ;

Then some fly off, and never more return,

And some repair again to whence they flew,

And others wheeling up and down sojourn,

' So seemed the fiery clusters now to do, 40

That blended had come down; so to divide,

As soon as past a certain grade they flew.

And he, who stayed the nearest at our side,

So brightened, that in thought I made avow,

"The love thou show'st me I have well descried; 45

But she from whom I wait the Where and How

Of speech and silence, yet is mute; thus I

Do well against my wish to ask not now."

But she, who scrutinized my silence by

The sight of Him, by whom all things are seen, 50

Bade me, "Thy ardent wishes satisfy."

Then I began, "My worth is all too mean

Thy answer to deserve, but for the sake

Of her, by whom to ask hath granted been,

O blessed soul, that of thy joy dost make 55

Thy covering, let me know the reason, whence

Thou dost so near to me thy station take.

And tell me, why at this circumference

Are mute the sweet accords of Paradise,
Which so devout down elsewhere greet our sense." 60
"Thou hast thy ears like-mortal as thine eyes,"

He answered, "and the cause, we do not sing,
Is that, why Beatris her smile denies.

Adown the holy stairs for this one thing 64

I came, that with glad cheer I mought thee greet
By words and by my Light engarmenting.

Nor was I prompted by my love's more heat,

For like love burneth, and in overplus,
Mid these, as by their flamings you can mete.

But that majestic Love, who maketh us 70

The Serfs of counsels, which o'er all things reign,
As thou observest here, decrees it thus."

"O sacred Lamp," I answered, "I see plain,

How through this hierarchy love's free will
Can th' everlasting polity maintain. 75

But this it is, that hard remaineth still,

Why out of all thy colleagues thou alone
Wast chosen forth, this function to fulfill."

When scarce the last word I had reached, that cone
Of splendor made its axis like a pin, 80
To whirl around on, like a swift millstone.
Then answered me the love, that dwelt therein,
“There's light divine, that over me descends,
Through-piercing this, which I am wombed within,
Whose operation with my vision blends, 85
And lifts me o'er myself, till I discern
That all-first Being, who adown it sends.
Thereof derives the joyance, whence I burn,
For like my vision, be't more clear or less,
Do I the clearness of my blaze return. 90
But not the soul, that hath most large access
Of light in heaven, not seraphs that most keep
Their eyes on God fast, can thy doubts profess
To satisfy, sithence they dive so deep
In God's abysmal counsel, that their clew 95
Is shut, where no created eyes may peep.
And when the mortal world thou meet'st anew,
Bring back this word, and let them not presume
Henceforth again such quarries to pursue.

On earth the minds, that here are lustrous, fume ; 100

Think now thyself, if they can there below
Do what they fail of, although Heaven illumine."

This language on his part refrained me so

That I gave up the question, and but prayed
Him humbly, what man he had been, to show. 105

"Betwixt the two Italian shores," thus made

He answer, "and not far from thy abode,
Are rocks at height where sounds of thunders fade ;
They form a ridge, on which the name bestowed

Is Catria ; under these a hermitage 110
Is consecrated, to lone worship owed."

Thus did he thirdly in discourse engage,

And afterwards went on, "Here did I give
Myself so firmly to God's vassalage,
That but with juice of Olives I could live 115

Seasoning my food, through frost or drouth on field,
Contented with my thoughts contemplative.

Once to these heavens did that cloister yield

Right largely, and 't is now grown barren land—
So much so, it must shortly be revealed, 120

Here lived I Petrus Damianus, and

Petrus Peccator did the Household sway
Of Holy Mary on the Adrian strand.

Short time in mortal life had I to stay,

When to that Cardinal's hat I was both led 125
And thrust, (which but from bad to worse finds way.)

Ah! Cephas hath gone poor and barefooted,

And the great Vessel, that the Spirit shrined,
Asking at doors however mean their bread;

While now your modern prelates must be lined 130

Each side with servitors, and drawn before,
(So heavy are they), and upborne behind.

Their palfreys with their robes are covered o'er;

Thus for two beasts a single hide they frame!
O patience, that endurest evermore!" 135

As thus he spoke, beheld I many a flame

Adown the ladder's steps who whirled and past,
And goodlier each at every whirl became.

About the first they marshalled and stood fast,

And raised a shout of such enormous sound 140

That all comparisons I find surpast,

Nor heard I words; such din my hearing drowned.

CANTO XXII.

OPPREST with consternation to my guide

I turned myself, as little children run
Always to her, in whom they most confide ;
And she, as mother rescueth her son

Breathless and pale—with voice, by which his heart
To disposition's good is always won, 6

Said to me, " Know'st not, that in heaven thou art,

And know'st thou not, that from good zeal is all
Done here, and heaven is hallowed every part ?
How would their song have changed thee, and withall

My smiling, of thyself thou mayst suppose, 11
When thou art moved so deeply by their call ;

In which hadst thou discerned what prayer arose,

Thou wouldst a vengeance know, that shall appear
Before thy eyes—or ever Death them close. 15

III.

M

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In haste the sword smites not, that is drawn here,

Nor lingers, but as men esteem delay,

Who look for it with hope, or else with fear.

But now 'tis time, thou turn a different way,

For spirits thou wilt see of highest praise, 20

If thou remove thy aspect, as I say."

Then I directed, as she bade, my gaze,

And saw above a hundred balls, that grew

More glorious under their commutual rays.

I stood as one, that striveth to subdue 25

The stings of his desire, and doth not dare

To ask—so sore he fears too much to do.

Anon the largest, and most lustrous-fair

Among these pearls, came out before the rest,

To satisfy my wishes for his share, 30

And, "if," said he, "the love were manifest,

That burneth here, to thee, as 'tis to me,

Thy thoughts already would have been exprest ;

But lest from thy great purpose thou shouldst be

Kept back, wert thou to wait, I will reply 35

To but the thought, that scruple causes thee.

That mountain, which Cassîno standeth by,

Aforetime held upon its top the haunts
Of the malignant pagans led awry ;

And I the first was thereon to advance 40

The name of Him, who down to earth-ward led
That Truth, that doth our weal so much enhance ;
And on me so much light of grace was shed,

That I withdrew the neighboring villages
From the bad worship, which the world misled. 45

All contemplative men were likewise these

Fires, that are with me, kindled by that heat,
Which nurseth flowers and fruits of sanctities.
Here Romuald, and Maccarius here I meet,

Here all my brethren, who in cloister's shade 50
Their hearts have tethered, not alone their feet."

I answered, " The good will thou hast displayed

To me in speaking, and the benevolence
In all your cressets noted and surveyed,
As greatly have enlarged my confidence, 55

As doth the Sun the rose, when she as wide
Expands, as Nature gives her competence.

I therefore ask, and pray thou wilt decide,
 Father, if I can have the grace divine,
 Thy semblance to behold unqualified." 60

"O brother, this exalted wish of thine
 Yon farthest sphere," he answered, "shall fulfill,
 Wherein sufficed are all desires with mine.
 There ripe, entire and perfect, every will
 Is rendered; every part therein alone 65

Remains, as it hath been, for ever still;
 For place it hath not, and revolves upon
 No poles; our ladder thereto doth extend,
 And hence thy sight is by it so outflown.
 Thus far the patriarch Jacob saw it send 70

Its upper part, when he thereon saw meet
 Such troops of angels; but to so ascend,
 There's not a man, that lifteth now his feet
 From earth, and verily, my Rule below
 Is left for nought but soiling many a sheet. 75

The walls, that were a convent long ago,
 Are caves of lewdness, and the cowls are what
 But sacks that with corrupted flour o'erflow?

But heinous usury more affronteth not

The will of God, than that emolument 80

That doth so deeply monkish hearts besot.

For whatsoe'er the Church may hold is lent

For only those, that ask it in God's name,

And not for nepotism, or worse intent.

So soft and dainty is the mortal frame, 85

That from the planted oak till fruit you see

A good beginning makes not all the game.

Did not St. Peter, lacking gold and fee

Commence his convent, and with fast and prayer
I mine, and Francis with humility? 90

And if thou glance at what the sources were

Of each, and then see how it hath flowed on,
Thou wilt indeed see foul grown out of fair.

Yet backward in good faith has Jordan gone, 94

And the sea's fleeing, when God willed, was more
Wondrous, than rescue here would seem anon."

He ceased, and midst his conclave as before

He mingled, and the conclave closer held

Together, and upward like a whirlwind bore.'

My lady-love me after them impelled 100

Up o'er that ladder, solely by her look ;
So much my Nature's checks her might dispelled.
And nought down here a movement ever took,

Where things by nature rise and fall, so fleet
As with my wing comparison could brook. 105

O reader, by my hopes afresh to meet

That holy triumph, for whose sake I mourn
My sins full often, and my bosom beat,
Thou wouldst in fire less quick have placed and torn

Away thy finger, than I saw the sign 110
Which follows Taurus, and was therein borne.

O noble stars, O light with power benign

Impregnated, to which I stand in debt
For all, whatever genius may be mine,
With you together rose, together set 115

He, that of mortal life is parent sole,
When first the Tuscan airs my temples beat ;
And when to that high sphere, in which you roll,

The grace had been apportioned me to rise,
Your region was selected for my goal. 120

'Tis now to you that with devoutest sighs

My soul doth for increase of power appeal
To cope with that dread pass to which she hies.

"Thou art so near the yondermost of weal,

That thou shouldst," Beatris began to say, 125

"Full clear and sharp thine eyes already feel.

So ere in it thou makest greater way,

Cast thy look downward, and how much of ground
I have laid underneath thy feet — survey,

So that with heart as blithe as can be found, 130

Thou mayst await the triumph-holding crew,
That comes exultant on this welkin round."

I lowered again my aspect all down through

Those seven spheres, and I beheld this ball
Such, that I smiled its paltriness to view, 135
And hold that counsel for the best of all,

Which vilipends it, and who turns elsewhere
His thoughts a true philosopher I call.

I saw Latona's daughter sparkling there

Without those shadows, whence I had begun 140
Before to deem, that she was dense and rare.

I bore the aspect, Hyperion, of thy son

Hence, and perceived, how near and round his face
The joys of Maia and Dione run.

The tempered shine of Jove there could I trace 145

Betwixt his Son and Father, and the mode
In which they toward each other change their place ;
And all these seven planets to me showed

How great their swiftness and circumference,
And how far parted was of each the road. 150

The area small, that makes our pride immense,

In my revolving with the Twins eterne
Appeared from estuaries to mountains ; thence
Did to the glorious eyes my eyes return.

CANTO XXIII.

As when the bird among the boughs beloved,
 Keeping beside her darlings' nest her seat,
By night, when things are from the view removed,
That sooner she the dear ones' looks may meet,
 And that by which she feeds them to purvey, 5
Counting for them her anxious labor sweet,
Forestalls the hours upon the unsheltered spray,
 And waits the sun with burning eagerness,
Poring with fixed eye for the peep of day,
So my heart's lady stood erect, no less 10
 Intent, and gazing firmly on the tract,
By which the sun least hurried seems to press ;
Whilst I, beholding her engrost and rapt,
 Became as one desirous to obtain,
And solaced in but hoping what he lackt. 15

But 'twas not long between the moments twain,

When I began to wait, and to behold

The heavens of brightness more and more to gain.

"Lo there," said Beatris, "the ranks unfold

Of Christ His triumph, there the fruit entire 20

Is gathered-in, for which these orbs have rolled."

Methought, that all her aspect shone like fire,

And so exulting did her eyes appear,

That I to phrasing it no more aspire.

As beameth in the full-mooned evenings clear 25

Titanis forth among the eternall fays,

By whom the heaven is patterned wide and near,

Over thousands of lamps I saw thus blaze

A sun, that made them all and each to flame,

As ours to those high beacons gives their rays. 30

And through that living light so keenly came,

As I beheld, the substance glorified,

That I to look upon it could not frame.

O Beatris, my lief'st and sweetest guide!

"That," said she, "which o'er-mastereth thy sight, 35

Is force, against which nothing can abide.

Lo there the Wisdom, therein is the Might,
That opened (where such long desire and pine
Had been) the road from earth toward heavenly height."
As fire that cloud no longer may confine 40
From its dilating, lanches forth, to fall
To earthward, swerving out of Nature's line,
So mid this high carouse, my soul went all
Abroad, enlarged beyond her native guise,
And cannot that which she became recall. 45
"Lift up, and look what I am like, thy eyes ;
Thou hast already looked on that, which thee
To bear my smile's effulgence qualifies."
As one, who feels his nightly phantasy
Gone from him, and who vainly tasks his wit 50
If brought within remembrance it can be,
So was I, when this proffer came, the fit
Subject of gratitude, that ne'er shall fade
Out of the book, wherein the past is writ.
If all the tongues now sounded in my aid, 55
That Polyhymnia with her sisters yet
By their sweet bosoms' flow have supplest made,

They could not pay one thousandth of my debt
To truth, in singing of the sacred smile,
In what gold sheen the sacred face it set. 60
And thus perforce the sacred poem, while
It sings of Paradise, like one whose road
Is cumbered, foots it with unequal style.
But whoso thinks upon the enormous load,
And of the mortal shoulders which upbear, 65
Must, when they stagger, think indulgence owed.
No waters for a puny skiff to dare
Are those, by which the bold prow hath to scour ;
They suit no pilot that himself would spare.
“Why dost thou so in love my face devour, 70
And the fair garden dost not turn to view,
Which by the rays of Christ himself doth flower ?
There is the rose, within which human grew
The Word of God ; there are those lilies, by
Whose breathing men the blessed way first knew.” 75
Thus Beatris, and I, that to comply
With her injunctions all alert had been,
Renewed the battling of my feebler eye.

As by a sunbeam when it pierces clean

Athwart a broken cloud, a floral field 80

Mine eyes, in shadow covered, oft have seen,

So many troops of splendors were revealed,

All lightened from above with dazzlingest

Rays, and the lightning's origin concealed.

O power benign, who them so blazonest, 85

Thou didst uplift thyself, that I might reach

To where mine eyes before had sunk oppress.

The Name of that fair Flower, whom I beseech

Both late and early, all my soul impelled

To scan the largest fire ; and soon as each 90

Of my sight's avenues empictured held

That living star, lo, such-like and so great,

Who there excelleth as she here excelled,

I saw through heaven a meteor penetrate,

That, diadem-like, was in a circle bent, 95

And I saw this involve her and rotate.

All earthly music, that with ravishment

Of sweetness draweth most our soul's desire,

Would seem a crash of cloud by thunder rent,

If set against the sounding of the lyre, 100

Which garlands the fair sapphire, that doth seal
Its azure on the brightest heaven's gyre.

"I am the angelic Lover, and I wheel

Around the rapture of the glory, given
From off the form, whose inmate was our weal. 105
And I shall wheel, thou Liege-ladye of heaven,

While thou, attendant on thy Son, this sphere
Diviner makest, which thou 'rt fain to live in."

Thus the orbicular melody was here

Charactered, and those other splendors all 110
To Mary's name gave replication clear.

That covering of all covers, kingly pall

Of the Creation, which most lives and glows
In God's breath and his works and ways withall,
Beyond us with its inner margin rose 115

So far, that where I stood, it had begun
No sign of its appearance to disclose.

And therefore in my eyesight power was none

Of following where the flame engarlanded
Was lifted up, attendant on her Son. 120

But as we see the babe with arms outspread

After his nurse, when he hath drawn the breast,
With passion throughout all his features shed,

So stretching out aloft their spires comprest,

Beheld I all those ardors, furnace-white, 125

Their love to Mary making manifest.

And so remained they postured in my sight,

Singing, "O Liege-ladye of Heaven," so sweet
That out of me ne'er faded the delight.

O what man the abundance can repeat, 130

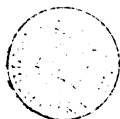
Which in those blessed garners is contained,
That here for sowing have been soils found meet?

Here live they joyous on the treasure gained

By weeping, captived in the Babylon,
Wherein the gold of each behind remained. 135

Here triumpheth beneath the exalted Son

Of God and Mary, with the Consistory
Of old and new Saints, for his battle won,
The keeper of the keys of all this glory.



CANTO XXIV.

“O CHOSEN-OUT, partakers of the great
Feast of that holy Lamb, by whom ye fare
On that which aye doth all your wishes sate,
If this man by the heavenly grace do share
Some foretaste in the fragments of your bread, 5
Or ever Death his timely hour prepare,
Regard his warmth of zeal unlimited,
And grant him some besprinkling; always you
Quaff at that fountain, whence his thought is shed.”
Thus Beatris; whereat the blest ones grew 10
As spheres revolving on their axles fast,
And flamed out vehemently, as comets do.
As turn the wheels of watches, when you cast
Your eyes upon them, in their due time so
That quiet one appears, and spins the last, 15

These Words of the Creator's thus 'gan show

The difference of their wealth by each his own
Dance's variety, one quick, another slow.

And from the fairest ring I marked, anon

I saw come out a fire of so much bliss, 20
That none therein was left, that brighter shone,
And thrice about the lady Beatris

It circled, with such heavenliness of song,
As fancy can repeat not, and for this
I spare to write it; my pen skips along, 25

For our imagination, (nought to say
Of speech,) is color for such traits too strong.
"O Saint and Sister mine, who dost us pray
With such devoutness, by affection's heat
From yon fair globe thou loosenest me away." 30

The blessed flame, when he had made complete

His revolutions, toward my lady bent
His point, through which he spoke as I repeat;
And she, "O light eterne of the great Saint,
To whom our Master gave the keys he bore 35
To earth of this our wondrous ravishment,

III.

N

This man's proficience, as thou lik'st, explore

In hard or easy points, that Faith concern,
By which thou walkedst on the seas of yore.

If love or hope or trust he rightly turn 40

Can from thee not be hidden, for 'tis seen
There, where all beings' likenesses return.

But since this Kingdom's denizens have been

Acquired through Faith, whom honored they should
make,

Her mention fitly here may intervene." 45

As a pupil standing mute, his arms may take,

Before his Master a topic shall propound,
For handling, not for resolution's sake,

So armed I me with every reason sound,

While yet she spoke, that I prepared might be 50
For such a querist, and on such high ground.

"Show thyself, Christian man? I ask of thee,

What thing is Faith?" Hereat I raised my head
To meet the Light, from whom this came to me,

Then to my lady turned, who through me shed 55

Fresh courage by her looks, that from my own
Interior fount I might the water spread.

"The grace of that first Captain, who to own
My trust hath granted me," began I then,
"Vouchsafe, my thoughts in fitting words be shown. 60
As we have learned, O father, by the pen
Of thy true brother, who the Romans brought
With thee into the ranks of trusting men,
Faith is the very substance of things wrought,
And of the things unseen an argument, 65
And herein stands her essence, to my thought."
"Thy tenets," then I heard, "with truth consent,
If, when he ranks it first with substances,
Then arguments, thou know well what is meant.
Thereat I answered, "Those high essences, 70
Which here to me unscarf themselves, of eyes
Beneath on earth so scape the accesses,
That in the bare belief their Being lies,
On which is built our lofty hope, and thus
Faith as a substance we characterize ; 75
And from that same belief we must discuss
Our doctrine, while we nothing more perceive ;
Hence takes it name of argument for us."

"If all, that men do in the world receive

By way of doctrine, thus were understood, 80

No room for wit of sophist would it leave ; "

This Fire of Love his breathing thus renewed,

And added afterwards, " We fairly now

Have weight and carat of this coin reviewed.

But tell me, thereof in thy purse hast thou ? " 85

" I have it," answered I, " so bright and round,

" That nought I stick, its mintage to avow."

That which next issued from the light profound

There breathing was, " And how didst thou obtain

This gem so costly, whereon rests the ground 90

Of all the Virtues ? " " That unstinted rain,"

I answered, " of God's Spirit, which is poured

O'er the new page and ancient, doth so plain

A syllogism, to prove me this, afford,

That every demonstration, to be told 95

Thereafter, would appear an edgeless sword."

Then heard I, " In the Statements new and old,

Which thou concludest from, what grounds are those

That make thee for God's message them to hold ? "

"The proofs," I answered, "whereon I repose, 100

Are the works done, for which yet Nature never
Made iron hot, nor swung 'gainst anvil blows."

"And who assures thee," was rejoined, "that ever
Such works have been? Who swears it for thee?

None

Save him to prove whose witness you endeavour." 105

"If without miracles the world was won,"

I answered, "to Christianity, be't so ;
They're all not worth a hundredth of this one.
For thou didst, poor and lacking nurture, go

Afield to plant that scion good, which some- 110
Time was a vine, but now is turned a sloe."

When this I closed, the high Court's halidom

Resounded sphere-wide a "Thee God We Praise,"
With harmony, such as might that heaven become.
And the great Peer, who deigned me thus to raise 115

From bough to bough in questions, and by whose
Instructions now I neared the topmost sprays,
Afresh began, "Soliciting grace, that woos

Thy mind, in bringing this much to an end,
Thy mouth has opened right as I would choose. 120

And that which thence has issued I commend ;

But now I ask, what is't thou dost believe,
And by what sanctions dost thou it defend ? ”

“O Sire and blessed Soul, who dost receive 124

That which thou trustedst in, when toward the grave
Thou didst the younger feet behind thee leave,”

Thus I began to answer, “ thou wouldst have

Me here the form of my quick faith unroll,
And that which for this faith th' occasion gave.

I answer, I believe in one God sole, 130

Eternal, and who moveth every heaven,
He moveless, by desire and love's control.

And to this faith not only am I driven

By grounds in nature and reflection too,
But by the truth, which raineth hence, 'tis given, 135
Through Moses, through the psalms and Prophets,
through

The Gospel, and by what from you I learn,
When nurselings of the Holy Ghost ye grew.

And I believe in Three Persons Eterne,

So single in their essence, and so trine, 140
That Are and Am have therewith like concern.

Regarding the great mystery divine

Of which I speak, full often sealed are my
Convictions by the Gospel's discipline.

This is the original, the spark whereby 145

Is kindled afterwards a flame so clear,
As burneth in me, like a star in sky."

As where his lord may from a servant hear

Glad words, and when he ceases, to his breast
May clasp him, thankful for reports so dear, 150

Thus, ever while he sang, and while he blest,

Embraced me, from the moment that I ceased,

That Apostolic light, by whose behest

I spoke, so perfectly my words him pleased.

CANTO XXV.

If ere 't is granted, that the sacred song,

Whereunto heaven and earth their hand have laid,
And haggard which has made me for years long,
Shall foil the rancors, which from me blockade

That pleasant fold, where as a lamb I lay, 5
Hating the wolves, who thereon war have made,
With altered voice, with altered fleece that day

As poet I'll return, and at the fount,
Where I was christened, on my brow put bay,
Because by Faith, which brings into account 10

Our souls with God, I entered here, and through
Such Faith St. Peter circled here my front.

And toward us after this a splendour drew

From out the band, whereof emerged the head
Of those, whom Christ on earth left in his lieu. 15

And, full of blitheness, my heart's lady said

“Look, and O look ; see yonder the great peer,
For whom beneath Gallice is visited.”

As when the dove by his companion dear

Alighteth from the wing, and each to each, 20

Cooing and circling, maketh love appear,

So to salute each other with glad speech

And cheer I saw these glorious princes great,

Lauding the food, which there aloft they reach.

But after ceasing to congratulate, 25

Full still before me stood that fire and this,

Radiant — mine eye bore not the splendor's weight.

And beaming thereupon spake Beatris,

“O glorious heart, for thine it was to write

Of our high Court the liberalities, 30

By thee let Hope be resonant in this height,

Whose part thou knowest, it is thyself that plays,

So oft as Jesus 'mid the Three grew bright.”

“Lift up (and take thou confidence) thy gaze,

For all, that from the mortal coil translated 35

Comes hither, needeth ripening in our rays.”

From the second fire this comfort emanated,

Whereat I lifted up mine eyes to these
Mountains, from which they erst had sunk amated.

"Because by grace our Suzerain doth please, 40

That thou, before thy death, come face to face
In court most secret with his Comites,

That having seen the truth of this high place,

Thou shouldst in others and thyself add power
To Hope, whence men below good zeal embrace, 45
Say, what she is, and how she makes to flower

Thy thoughts, and how she came to build by thee,"
So spoke afresh that second light, "her bower."
And in my answer pity-loving she,

Who my wings' feathers such a height to soar 50
Had guided, thus anticipated me ;

"No Child hath God's Church Militant with more

Of Hope than he possesseth, as the Sun
Recordeth, who this whole troop shineth o'er ;
And therefore out of Egypt hath he won 55

The grace, to enter Salem for a scout
Before his term of service be outrun.

Those other questions two, which not from doubt

Thou askest, but that he may well report,
How dear to thee this virtue is throughout, 60
I leave him, as to whom they will not thwart,

Nor bragging need; which let him testify,
And may the grace of God not fall him short."

As a pupil to the master may reply,

In theme well known, with quick and free content, 65
That his proficiencie others may descry,

"Hope is that looking forward confident,"

Said I, "to future glory, that doth stream
From grace, which is to previous merit lent.
Such light doth many a star upon me beam, 70

But therewith did he first my heart infuse,
Who was chief Minstrel of the Chief Supreme.

'Let there be Hope,' thus saith his lofty Muse,

God-praising, 'unto those who know thy Name,'
And sure he knows it, whom my faith embues. 75

His droppings with the words thou droppest came

In thy epistle, whence I am replete,

And shower upon my brethren of the same."

While yet I spoke, as vivid and as fleet

As lightning flash, in midmost of that blaze 80

I saw a pulse of keener splendor beat.

Then breathed it out, "The ardent love, that stays

Yet in me for the virtue, which hath stept

My comrade to field fought, and granted bays,

Bids me bespeak thee soft, that thou accept 85

Her comfort, and I gladly would be told,

What promise Hope before thine eyes hath kept?"

I answered, "The new Scriptures and the old

Lay down the port, by sight here to me known,

For spirits with the friends of God enrolled. 90

Isaiah saith, that each amidst her own

Country shall be arrayed with double vest,

And by their country this sweet life is shown.

Thy brother too more largely hath exprest

This revelation by the things averred 95

As touching those that in white robe are drest."

And after and before my closing word

A "let them hope in Thee" which every choir

Made answer to, from overhead was heard.

And from among them parted then a fire, 100
Might make a winter's month a single day,
If Cancer such a diamond should acquire.
As blithe a virgin rises, moves away,
And joins the dance, that honor she may do
The bride, (her thoughts to evil do not stray,) 105
That segregated brightness toward the Two
Came up, while in their circle round and round,
Rapid as it fits their ardent love, they flew.
It mingled in their measure and their sound,
And Beatris her looks upon them stayed, 110
Bride-like, in stillness, rooted to the ground.
"Behold, whose head was on the bosom laid
Of our blood-giving Pelican, who bore
The sacred charge from on the Cross conveyed."
Thus my liege-lady spake, yet nothing more 115
Removed the attentive earnest of her eyes,
After these words were ended than before.
And as it goes with one, who peers and tries
To see the Sun's eclipse a little space,
From whom his sight by too much seeing flies, 120

So found I with that second fire my case,

“ And wherefore dazzlest thou thyself to see,”

Thus heard I said, “ that which has here no place ?

Dust is with dust my body, and shall be

Such, till the number in these hosts of ours 125

Is equalled with Eternal God's decree.

With double vesture in the blissful bowers

Are but the lights of Two, that have ascended,

And this report thou in that world of yours.”

And at these words the fiery circling ended, 130

And ceased as suddenly the dulcet mood,

That from the Trio's voices had come blended.

As when, fatigue or peril to preclude,

The oars, that whilom on the waters beat,

Cease at the signal's breath, so stilled they stood. 135

Ah but in what a coil my thoughts were set,

When, turning round to look for Beatris,

I could not see her, though I certes yet

Was by her close, and in the realm of bliss !

CANTO XXVI.

WHILE yet for loss of eyes perplexed I stayed,

There came a breathing from the fulgent flame
That blinded them, which my attention swayed.

He said, "Untill thy vision, which became

Exhausted on me, be afresh supplied, 5

Thou shouldst with reasoning compensate the same.

Begin then, tell me, whereon doth abide

Thy heart, and earn a claim, on which to stand,
That sight may be withheld thee, not denied;

Because the lady, through this Angel's land 10

Who guides thee, she hath in her looks the skill
Dwelling, which Ananias had in his hand."

I said, "Or late, or soon, at her sweet will,

Come healing to those eyes, through which she went
As portals with the flames, that fire me still. 15

The Good, that maketh all this Court content,
Of what Love readeth me, in tone or light
Or loud, is first and latest element."

Then the same voice, which had appeased my fright,
Occasioned by that sudden-blinding glow, 20
I heard thus freshly to discourse invite.

"Thou hast across a finer sieve to go,
(There is no help,) but say, who made thee deem
That thou shouldst bend at such a targe thy bow?"

I said, "By philosophic enthymeme, 25
And by the truth which from this height descends,
This love upon me cannot else than stream;

For whoso good, and as good, apprehends,
He thereof catches love, and larger store,
As more of goodness with itself it blends. 30

Then toward that Being, which so stands before
All else, that beyond Him, all good whate'er
Is from his light a glinting, nothing more,
Needs must the mind go deeper than elsewhere

In loving, that is mind, which can discern 35
The truth that doth my argument upbear.

This truth is plainly shown, that I may learn,

By him, who doth the First-beloved unfold
Of all that liveth as by life eterne.

This the true Author's voice hath plainly told, 40

Who speaking of himself to Moses said,
'I shall thee make all goodness behold.'

Thou tell'st it also plainly at the head

Of thy great Tidings, which the Truth from hence
Adown on earth has loudest heralded." 45

Then heard I, "After man's intelligence

And heavenly sanction, which therewith agrees,
To God the chiefest of thy love dispense.

But tell me, dost thou feel no cords but these 49

To draw thee toward him? speak, and be it shown
By teeth how many does that love thee seize."

Then was the sacred purpose not unknown

Of Christ his Eagle, but I was aware
To what he my profession would lead on.

I answered him, "All seizures whatsoe'er, 55

That can to Godward living hearts incline,
In this my charity have a part and share.

For by the existence of the world, and mine,
The death, which that I might have life, he bore,
The hopes, that me with all believers join, 60
Through quickening doctrines, which I said before,
I from the surge of wandering love have been
Raised, landed on love leal for evermore.
I love the plants, that make the garden green
Of their eternal planter, as among 65
All such the worth, from Him derived, is seen."
Scarce had I ceased, and all about me rung
Sweet choral voices, yea, my heart's ladye
"Holy, holy, holy," in the number sung.
As when from open day our slumbers flee, 70
The visual spirits hastening to fetch-in
The splendor's gush from coat to coat, whilst he
That wakes, abhors his faculty to win,
So inexpert is that first waking stound,
Ere consciousness her ministry begin, 75
So Beatris from every film unbound
My eyeballs at th' effulgence of her smile,
Beaming a thousand thousand fathoms round ;

So that I saw much better than erewhile,

And I began to ask in my amaze 80

About a Light, that fourth had joined our file.

My lady answered me, " Within those rays

Doth the first living soul, that by the first
Puissance was fashioned, on her Maker gaze."

As when the wind goes by, the bough that erst 85

Had lowered its top, recovers on the stroke,
And towers up, by its vigor inly nurst,
So droopt I through amazement while she spoke,

And afterwards grew bolder by a desire
To speak, that in me burningly awoke. 90

" O fruit, who wast alone produced entire

In ripeness," I began, " thou parent old,
Of every bride both father and beldere,
I pray with all devoutness heart can hold

That thou instruct me ; thou discern'st my mind,
Which I to sooner hear thee leave untold." 96

As when a creature under scarfs we blind,

His actuating impulse through that gear
Is manifested, which he pulls behind,

The protophyte of souls thus made appear 100
 To me across his bright environment,
That he to please me came with right glad cheer ;
Then breathed, "No need, that thou shouldst represent
 Thy wish ; for better is by me than thee
Discerned, whate'er thou hast most clearly meant. 105
For in that soothfast mirror I it see,
 Which makes of all things copies on its face,
And copied can itself by nothing be.
Wouldst ask, how long ago did God me place
 In yon fair garden, where that lady mild 110
To make this flight so distant brought thee grace,
And for how long upon my eyes it smiled,
 And for the great offence what cause was found,
And by what language I things named and styled.
Not in the tree I tasted was the ground, 115
 O Son, which brought on my dread banishment,
Nay, but in the overstepping of the bound.
There whence thy lady towards thee Virgil sent,
 Four thousand and three hundred, thirty and two
Sun's periods, pining for this home I went. 120

And thirty and nine hundred times anew

I saw that Sun return to every light
Along his road, ere I from flesh withdrew.
The language that I formed had perished quite,

Ere yet upon the labor unmatutable 125

The companies of Nimrod set their might.

For since the heavenly movements unassurable

Change human tastes, the affection of a heart
With reason gifted never was perdurable.

To speak is that which Nature doth impart, 130

But thus or thus, she leaves it, as the doom
Determines, of your liking and your art.

Ere my descending to the infernal gloom

That Goodness was upon the Earth named El,
Of which the joys that overwrap me come, 135
And afterwards Eli, and thus 'tis well ;

For what are human customs, but as leaves
On boughs ; one riseth where another fell.

I dwelt upon the mount, that deepest leaves

The sea beneath it, in pure life and leal, 140
From dawn till that hour, which the Sun receives
After the sixth, when shadows eastward steal.

CANTO XXVII.

"GLORY to Father, Son and Holy Spirit,"

Thus heard I sing, with sweetness that my soul
Made giddy, all who Paradise inherit.

In that I saw, the Universal Whole

Seemed uttering laughter, for my drunkenness 5
I felt through eyes and ears alike to roll.

O joy, O inexpressive blissfulness,

O life of Love and Peace without a flaw,
O wealth nought-lacking, safe from all distress.

These ardors four in front of me I saw 10

Flaming, and he that came before the rest
Grew brighter, and a tinge began to draw

Across his aspect, such as might invest

The sheen of Jupiter, if Mars and he
Were birds, and each in other's plumage drest. 15

The Providence, that function and degree

To all appointeth, in the blest array

Had bidden silence in all parts to be.

“If I change color,” he began to say,

“Admire thou not, for while I speak my case, 20

Thou wilt transcolored all the rest survey.

He that usurps upon the earth my place,

Upon the earth my place, my place, that void

Remains before the Son of God his face,

Hath made my Vault a sewer, which is cloyed 25

By slaughter and by lust ; whence He malign,

Who fell from here above, deep down hath joyed.”

As when the horizon clouds incarnadine,

By morn or evening, in the sunbeam sheer,

Such tinges I beheld all heaven to line. 30

And as a virtuous lady, that with clear

Trust in herself remains, and at the theme

Of others fall grows troubled in her cheer,

So now did Beatris transfigured seem,

And such eclipse came haply over heaven 35

Th’ passion of the Majesty Supreme.

Continuation to his words was given

In voice, so changed from what it was, that more
Of change came not across his features even.

“ Not fostered was the Bride of Christ of yore 40

By Cletus', Linus', and by my last vein,
That she might grow a means to lay up store.
Nay, but the rapture of this life to gain,

Sextus, Calixtus, Pius, Urban were
Of those, who left life after grief and pain. 45

It was not our intention, that the heir

Of our great office, part upon his right,
Part on his left, should Christian peoples share ;
Nor from the keys, to which my trust was plight,

That men a sign for battle flags should frame, 50
Therewith against baptizèd foes to fight ;
Nor that they for a seal should use my name

For venal pardons, which are no such thing,
Through which I often blush, and blur my flame.
In shepherds' raiment wolves are ravening 55

Through all the pastures with unhindered course ;
O arm of God, why art thou slumbering ?

Lo, Gascons and the dwellers of Cahors

To drink our blood prepare ; unto what vile
Conclusions must thou dribble, O pure source ! 60

But that high foresight, which for Rome erewhile

Preserved the general Crown by Scipio,
Shall rescue soon, or me my hopes beguile.

And thou my Son, who back to earth must go,

As burthened by thy flesh, thy mouth unbar, 65
And cover nought where I no cover throw."

As when our skies with frozen vapors are

Thronged in descending flakes, while the Sun's road
From the celestial goat's horn is not far,

So now adorned that heavenly ether glowed 70

With triumph-holding meteors upward sped,
That erst with us beneath had made abode.

My eyes were after their appearance led,

Nor ceased to follow, till beyond all bound
Of sight increased the breadth between us shed. 75

My lady then, who me no longer found

Absorbed in looking upward, "Lower," she said,
"Thy glance, and see how much thou art come round."

Now from the moment, when I first had spied,
The sun had past already all degrees 80
That with the land's first climate coincide.
Hence the wild cruise of Laertiades
I saw beyond the Straits, and eke the shore
On which Europa's weight was found to please.
And I had scope yet farther to explore 85
This area small, but that the sun made way
Advanced before us by a sign or more.
My mind enamored, which doth always play
The wooer towards my lady, more than ever
Now burned, afresh on hers mine eyes to lay. 90
And if both Art and Nature should endeavor
To bait our minds, which through the eyes are caught,
With pictures or with human parts, there never
Could come from all their works assembled aught
To match the bliss divine, that on me shone, 95
When mine to meet those radiant eyes I brought.
The power, that such a sight vouchsafed, anon
Disparted me from Leda's lovely nest,
And urged me into the rapident heav'n on,

Whose parts most glorious, with most life possest, 100

Are so alike, that which by Beatris

Had been selected was not manifest,

But she, who my desirous doubt of this

Perceived, began to speak with so glad shine,

That God seemed in her aspect uttering bliss. 105

“ The Nature of those motions, which confine

The centres, and the rest around them bear,

Commences here as from the starting line.

And to this Heaven belongs no other Where

Except God's mind, in which the Love is lit, 110

That rolls it, and the virtues it doth share.

Around it light and love their circle fit,

As it doth round all others, and that bound

He only comprehends who stablished it.

No measure of its march is elsewhere found, 115

But every motion measured is thereby,

As five and two the decuple compound.

And how in suchlike a substratum lie

The roots of time, and how its boughs diverge

Elsewhither, thou mayst plainly now descry. 120

O Covetousness, who dost men submerge

So deep down in thyself, that none hath power
Above thy miry pool his head to urge!

Forsooth good will in men puts forth her flower,

But wildings in the place of grapes are shown, 125
Thanks to cold Care's unintermitting shower.

Faith, but and Innocence, are found alone

With little children; then they scatter fast,
Before the down across the cheek have grown.

There is, that lispeth, and doth learn to fast, 130

Who afterwards with tongue untied from May
To April down his throat all meats will cast.

There is that, lisping, loveth to obey

His mother, and he'll wish her in the tomb,
When sentences unbroken he can say. 135

So the clear skin doth sallowness assume

In the young aspect of some daughter fair,
Of him, who brings us dawn and leaves us gloom.

Thou, lest thou marvel, when I thus declare,

Consider, over Earth there is no King, 140
And hence Man's household goes astray, but ere

Your January shall enter into spring
By the neglected fraction of the year,
Through these high orbs will Preparation ring,
Through which the gust looked-out-for shall appear, 145
That, where the poop hath been, the prow shall
speed ;
Then shall the Navy hold its due career,
And after flowers shall very fruit succeed."

CANTO XXVIII.

AGAINST the present life of human kind

Baleful, when Truth had thus been shown to me
By her, who sets in Paradise my mind,
As when a man may in the mirror see

The taper's flame, that is behind him lit, 5
Ere in his thought or sense the substance be,
He turns to look, if truth be told of it

By that reflection, and perceives that each
To each, as tunes to their own burthens fit ;
So I remember, that amidst her speech 10

It fared with me, whilst on those beauteous eyes
I looked, whence me the noose of love did reach.
And as I turned me, and as to my spies

Appeared what is apparent in yon Book
To whoso doth its orb well scrutinize, 15

A point, that light was radiating, strook

My sight, so fiery, that each eye it sears

No more to open to its blaze can brook.

The star, that smallest in our sight appears

Close by the moon, would seem a moon, if set 20

Beside it, like a star beside his peers.

And near it, as the watery coronet

Is to the light, from which its color flows,

When thickest are its forming vapors met,

I saw a burning ring that point enclose, 25

Revolving—there is not a sphere more swift,

That round the world in shortest period goes.

Around this ring I saw the next ring shift,

The third round that, the fourth around the third,

And the fifth round the fourth, and sixth round fifth, so

And the seventh over that, so far transferred,

That Juno's handmaid with her circle spun

Completely, hardly would its compass gird ;

And so the eighth and ninth ring, and the run

Of each was tardier, as the number grew 35

Farther and farther distant from the One.

And in its flame was each of purer hue,

As near that living spark I saw it roll,

I judge, because its insight is more true.

My lady then, for she perceived my soul 40

Poised in grave doubt, said, "From that point are
hung

The heavens of heaven, and Nature's general whole.

Observe the circle nearest thereto slung,

And know thou, that its motion hath such haste,

From the hot burning love, whereby 'tis stung." 45

"If," hereupon said I, "the world were placed

I' th' order, which among these orbs I note,

This answer might have all my doubts embraced.

But in the world of sense all things by rote

Are in their nature so much more divine, 50

As from the centre they are more remote.

If I may slake then this desire of mine

In yon angelicall and marvelled fane,

Which none, excepting light and love, confine,

So must I hear, why march not in one train 55

The Type and what therein is typified,

For by myself I muse thereon in vain."

"No marvel, if thy fingers to divide

Thus fine a knot may inexpert be still ;

'Tis grown so hard by being left untried." 60

So said my lady, and added, "To fulfill

Thy wishes, take that which I now declare,

And thereto let thy mind set all her skill.

The spheres of matter are some large, some spare,

According to the puissance, more or less, 65

Which they, diffused in every portion, bear ;

For greater Weal to greater bounteousness

Is due, and greater space to greater weal,

If evenly through every part it press.

So to that sphere, that with itself doth wheel 70

Round and round all the universe sublime,

Answers the ring, that most doth know and feel

God's love, and if thy estimation chime

With the quick power, and not circumference,

O' th' beings thou discernest at this time, 75

Thou wilt see wonderful coincidence

Of more to greater, less to smaller here,

'Twixt every heaven and its intelligence."

III.

P

As when the skiey vault all bright and clear

Remains, if Boreas from the cheek that most 80

With breath is freighted, shall have blown out sheer,

For then is driven away, dissolved, and lost

The reek, that erst obscured it, so that heaven
Smiles, in the gloriousness from all his host ;

So fared I, on such limpid answer given 85

By my own lady, opening on my view
The truth, as plainly as any star in heaven.

And soon as to their close the words she drew,

Those heavenly circles, like the scintillation
Of boiling iron, out into sparkles flew. 90

And every single spark that conflagration

So copied, that the number would require
More figures than the Chessboard's duplication.

I heard Hosannas pealed from quire to quire

Toward the firm point, in which their place hath
been, 95

And is, and shall be, when all terms expire.

Therewith my lady, who my thoughts had seen

In doubt far sunken, answered " The first rings
Have showed thee Seraphin and Cherubin.

With such a rapidity follow they their strings, 100

Because their insights to their powers agree ;

Their powers are such, as fit the chief'st of things.

Those others, circling in the next degree,

Are callèd Thrones of the Divine Aspèct,

From their completing the supremest Three. 105

And know, that they are blissful in respect

Of how far every one sees deep within

The Truth, in which hath peace all intellect.

Hence blessedness appeareth to begin,

(Thou wilt distinguish,) in the act of Sight, 110

Not that of Love, which afterwards comes in.

The measure of their seeing is the Right

Of merit, which Divine Grace fathereth

On their good Will ; 'tis thus from height to height.

That second hierarchy, which blossometh 115

Upon the lap of the perennial May,

That never nightly Aries plundereth,

With perpetual Hosannas keeps away

Winter, with melodies threefold, in three

Orders of gladness, wherein grouped are they. 120

There tripartite, the Goddesses mayst see ;

The first place to the Domination falls,
Then comes the Virtue, last the Potency.

Next, in the two welnigh-last coronalls,

Wheel Princedoms, and Archangels; and their
trinity

125

Is filled up by the Angelic madrigalls.

Thus gazing upwards, every consanguinity,

And influencing downwards, from above
Is drawn, and under draws to the Divinity.

And Dionysius with such hearty love

130

To scan these orders set himself, he quite
As I do, told the names and rank thereof.

But Gregory his opinion thought not right ;

Hence, when he opened first his eyes amid
These orbs, he laught at his own oversight.

135

And if a mortal man such truth deep-hid

Propounded, I would have thee not admire,
For One, that saw it here, the secret did
Unfold, and many more about each gyre.

CANTO XXIX.

WHEN both Latona's twins, in Aries
And Libra gliding, our horizon take
For a joint girdle, mark the time that flees
From when the zenith shall their balance make,
On which they rest in equipoise, until 5
They, changing hemispheres, that union break.
For such a time had Beatris been still
With face enbeamèd, and with firm-set ken
Upon the point, which had dismayed my will.
"I tell, and do not ask of thee," she then 10
Began to say, "for thy desire I view
In that, which centres every Where and When.
Not, that Good might unto Himself accrue,
(Which cannot be,) but that His 'Brightness' might
Say, glancing back, 'I have subsistence true,' 15

Beyond all Time, all comprehending site,
 (Eternity inhabiting,) flowed abroad
Into Nine Loves the One Love infinite.
Nor erst was like a frozen brook, then thawed,
 Nor did it *Erst* nor *Afterwards* betide, 20
That o'er these Waters moved the Spirit of God.
Matter and Form, both maiden, both allied,
 From Act, in which no imperfection was,
Forth, like three shafts from triple bowstring hied.
And as through amber, and through spar, and glass,
 Betwixt the first arriving of the gleam, 26
And the pervading, doth no moment pass,
So this threefold effect of our Supreme
 Did realize itself, and all through all,
Without distinction of beginnings, beam. 30
Rank, Order, were created therewithall ;
 To those, on whom was Energy imprest
Alone, did first place among Beings fall.
Pure Passiveness the undermost possest,
 And Energy, and Passiveness between 35
With tendrils ne'er to be entwined carest.

St. Jerome wrote at large to you, I ween,
About Angelic Æons lasting long
Ere aught of all the World beside had been.
Yet still to point you out this truth a throng 40
Of Writers did the Holy Ghost inspire,
And thou wilt find it, if thy zeal be strong.
And this would Reason too in part require ;
For ill she brooks the Movers long should stay
In lack of that, which maketh them entire. 45
Now these God-loving ones thou know'st, when they
Have been created, where and how,— thus are
Three burnings from thy bosom put away.
And of these angels, ere you could as far
As twenty count up, did a certain part 50
Bring 'mid your settled elements a jar.
Those, who were left behind, took up the art,
That thou beholdest, with delight so great,
That from their circling never they depart.
The cause of falling from their first estate 55
Was that Accurst his pride, whom thou hast seen
Opprest under the world's concentrated weight.

Those, who were left, could modestly demean

Themselves, and recognize that bounty, whence
They for such knowledge were created keen. 60
Their intuitions were uplifted hence

By light of grace, and their own merit, so
That Holiness possess in permanence
Their wills, and I'd not have thee doubt, but know,
There's merit in receiving grace from how 65
We open our affection to its flow.

And so far in this consistory thou

Hast much to contemplate, if thou but lay
My words to heart without more comments now.
But since on Earth among your schools men say, 70

The nature of the angels doth enfold
Love, Will, and Recollection, I'll display
The subject farther, that thou mayst behold

That very truth, which they but half reveal,
Equivocating in the lore thus told. 75

These Beings, when they once had joy and weal,

God's face beholding, never turned their view
Aside from that, whence none may aught conceal.

Their Vision therefore is by objects new

Ne'er interrupted ; hence they have no need 80
Of recollection from thought broken through.

So there men dream awake, some taking heed,

And others not, how much untruth they tell ;
Yet have the first more shame and more misdeed.

Ye do not, in philosophizing, dwell 85

On one pervading line of inference,
And study and love of showing-off impell
To this, but even this doth less offence

Produce on high, than when you underrate
The Sacred Scriptures, or pervert their sense. 90

'Tis not considered, at how dear a rate

On Earth they have been planted, or how deep
Men please, that humbly them interrogate.

All for appearances they strive, and heap

Inventions up, and these a stock supply 95
For preachers, and the Gospel goes to sleep.

One tells you, that the Moon was turned awry

At our Lord's passion, and came in between,
And cut your sunlight off, and he doth lye.

For of itself the light was hid, I ween, 100

And therefore, both in Spain and at the Indies,
As by the Hebrews, that eclipse was seen.

There's not so many Lappis, nor yet Bindis

In Florence, as the number of such tales
In every twelvemonth buzzed on every wind is. 105
Hence come to fold the sheep, whom judgement fails,

Filled up with air, for whose excusing then
The ignorance of their peril nought avails.

Our Savior formed a true foundation, when

He chose out his first envoys ; he ne'er said 110
'Go forth, and preach ye rigmaroles to men.'

His word, that in their cheeks was trumpeted,

So pealed, that when to kindle faith they fought,
It served them, both in sword and buckler's stead.

But now with crotchets and with quirks far sought 115

Men go to preach, and if good laughs they raise,
There shall be fat cheeks cowed ; else mind they nought.

But in that nest a winged creature stays,

Whom if the public saw, they might misdoubt
The pardon, whereto each such credit lays. 120

Thence hath on earth such folly gone about,

That, seeking not one testimony or sign,

Their jaws for every promise are held out.

By such St. Anthony makes fat his swine,

And others, who than swine far worse are yet, 125

Who pay, and stamp was never on the coin.

But since we so far out have rambled, set

Thine eyes upon the straight high road once more,

That shorter, like our time, our task may get.

This Nature doth to such high number soar, 130

That mortal faculty no words could yield

To speak it, nor conception to explore.

And if thou study that which is revealed

By Daniel, thou wilt in his myriads find

That strict account of number is concealed. 135

That Love, whence all their aspects are beshined,

As oft as there are beings to receive,

So often is received in different kind,

Since ever with the actions that conceive

The affections follow; wherewith his delight, 140

Fervent or tepid, love must in them leave.

Now contemplate the vastness and the height
Of yon Eternal Goodness, which can mould
So many a mirror, whereon breaks his light,
Remaining one the selfsame as of old.

CANTO XXX.

ABOUT six thousand miles from us the noon
Is blazing, and the Earth her shadow steep
Inclines, to reach our Ocean's level soon,
When over us the midmost heaven deep
Begins to alter, so that many a star 5
Fails in this underworld her trace to keep.
And ere the Sun's most glorious handmaid far
Forth pushes, all the heaven is disarrayed
Of gem by gem to those that loveliest are.
E'en so did the Ovation there, that played 10
Aye round the point, by which my sight was quelled,
(Which seemed containing its Container,) fade
Little by little, e'en till I beheld
Nought there, and back to look on Beatris
By this and by my loving was impelled. 15

If all, that hath been told of her till this,
I could in one amount of praise unite,
For this occasion it would serve amiss.
Nor only doth such beauty pass all height
Of our experience ; none, I think, but He 20
Who made it, can receive its whole delight.
Here vanquisht I confess myself to be,
As by his subject in one point was never
Child of Thalia, nor Melpomenè ;
For as the Sun doth eyebeams, that most quiver, 25
So doth the memory of the sacred smile
From its own self my recollection sever.
From the first day that I beheld her, while
She dwelt on earth, and up to that last view,
To keep behind her faileth not my style ; 30
But now my song her beauties to pursue
With farther poetizing must forbear,
As artists at the noblest they can do.
Such, as I leave her for some louder blare
Than of my clarion, which out-windeth here 35
Its arduous theme concluding, she with air

And voice, that might a strenuous Chief's appear,
 Afresh began, "We are come out above
The greatest body upon the pure-light-sphere,
Of light intelligential filled with love, 40
 Love unto soothfast good with joy replete,
Joy, that no pain excels the intenseness of.
'Tis here thou shalt the twofold armies meet
 Of Paradise, and one now in the faces
Thou shalt behold about the Judgement-seat." 45
As when a burst of sudden brightness chases
 The visual spirits, and our sight deprived
Remaineth of the plainest objects' traces,
Thus was I flasht-around with light enlived,
 That left me by the swathings of its glow 50
So veiled, that nothing to my sight arrived.
"The Love, that our heaven quiets, always so,
 Saluting, to itself receives us each,
That fit the taper for its light may grow."
Within me scarcely had this little speech 55
 Had time to enter, when I apprehended
My faculties beyond themselves to reach.

My sight rekindled with new sight was blended,
Such, that there is not found so bright a ray,
From which my eyes would not have been defended. 60
And I saw light in a river's shape, that lay,
Fulgent with lightnings, between shore and shore
Tapestried with a marvel-working May.
And I saw sparkles from its current soar,
And sink into the flowers all round, which grew 65
Like to gold settings with a ruby core.
Then by the odor seeming swilled, anew
Down in those rapids marvellous they fell,
And as one entered, forth another flew.
"Those high desires, that warm thee and impell, 70
Of knowing that, which yet thou dost but see,
Please me the more, as more like buds they swell.
Yet must yon waters first be sipt by thee,
Before Content such thirst extinguishes ;"
Thus said the own Sun of mine eyes to me. 75
"The flowers," she added, "and the topazes,
Entering and issuing, and this beaming mead
Are of their Truth foreshadowing prefaces.

Nor in themselves hard are they to aread,
Nay, but the obstacles on thy part rest ; 80
Thy meaner vision yet such views exceed."
No babe more eager darteth to the breast
His face, when it befalls him to awake
Far later than his wont, than I address
Myself, that better mirrors I might make 85
Out of mine eyes, by dipping in the brook,
Which flows, that thence of Weal you may partake.
And when the sockets of mine eyeballs took
Its moisture into them, at once it veered,
And round in place of straight began to look. 90
Anon like folks, that have in masks appeared,
And seem as changelings, when they put away
That foreign garb, in which they misappeared,
So changed here to a jubilee more gay
The sparks and flowers before me, and I saw 95
The twofold Courts of Heaven in full array.
Splendor of God ! O thou, by whom I saw
The twofold Courts of Heaven their jubileeing,
Vouchsafe me grace to utter what I saw.

There is a Light up yonder, which the Being 100
Of the Creator to that Creature shows,
To whom there is no peace, except Him seeing.
And in its figure circular it flows
Abroad so far, that its circumference
Would for the Sun too large a belt compose. 105
From rays, reflected at their incidence
On the First Mover, cometh all its shine,
That sphere its power and life acquiring hence.
And as the banks, that toward a stream incline,
Make it their mirror, eager to discern 110
What spoils they wear of blades and blossoms fine,
So round above that light at every turn
I saw reflected on some thousand thrones,
All that from us could thereunto return.
If in itself the lowest of these zones 115
Such room includeth, how much must include
That Rose i' th' farthest petals that she owns!
My vision by the expanse or altitude
Was not bewildered, but in-gathered all,
Such-like and so great, that beatitude. 120

No nearness great, or distance maketh small

There, for when God sans intervention sways,
The laws of Nature out of reckoning fall.

To the yellow of that Rose, which ne'er decays,

Which blows, and spreads, and offers to yon Sun 125
Ever May-making, sweet savors of praise,
Beatris led me, mute at first, as one

Eager to speak, and then she spoke, " Behold
How vast the white-robed Congregation!

Look, what a range our City doth enfold! 130

Look, how upon the Chairs they sit so nigh,
That few there wanteth every space to hold.
In the great Chair, on which thou keep'st thine eye,

Drawn by that Crown, already placed thereon,
Before thou suppest at these nuptials high, 135
A soul, that empire must amongst you don,

Will sit — great Henry, who shall to coerce
Italia march, when she saith ' Come anon.'

That covetousness blind, which is your curse,

Hath made you equal to the Child, half-dead 140
With hunger, and who pushes off his nurse.

And at this time the Sacred Forum's head

Shall be a man, whose covered and profest
Plans are not wont in the same path to tread ;

Whom in the Sacred Functions long to rest 145

Shall God not suffer then, but thrust him low,
Where Simon Magus earned by works his nest,
And deeper down Anagni's Pope must go.

CANTO XXXI.

IN form as a white rose the sanctified

Host therefore was presented to mine eye,
Whom Christ had bleeding taken for his Bride.
But their Associates, whose it is to fly,

And hymn and laud the Goodness, which their
powers 5

Gave, and the Glory they're enamored by,
As when a swarm of bees amongst the flowers

Awhile dip, and another while return
Where the sweet labor swelleth in their bowers,
Alighted on that ample flower superne 10

Glorious with many leaves, then sallied nigher
Where of their love the Lord doth aye sojourn.
Their faces all were like as living fire,

Their wings were golden, and the rest so white,
That never snows in whiteness mounted higher. 15

Descending on the flower from height to height

They flew, depositing of the peace and love,
Whose fire they had been fanning in their flight.

Nor did the entering 'twixt the Part above

And Flower — of all that multitude on wing 20
Impair the sight or gloriousness thereof ;

For God's voice in the universe doth ring,

Ever as it merit finds, in every place ;
Check never can it find, nor limiting.

This realm secure and glad, by many a race 25

Ancient and modern crowded, on one part
Concentred all their love, and every face.

O Light, who, trinal in thy lone star, art

Their blessing, as before their view thou glow'st,
Look down to usward our life-storm athwart ! 30

If the Barbarians, coming from the coast

O'er which Calisto circles day by day,
Her son pursuing whom she loveth most,
Beholding Rome's great masses in the day

When Laterâno topped the world, might feel 35
Dismayed with wonder, what was my dismay—

From temporal to immortal commonweal,
And from things human to celestial, *and*
From Florence to a nation good and leal
To be transplanted, thence you'll understand; 40
Certes, 'twixt joy and wonder I was fain
To hear no word, and silent there to stand.
And as the pilgrim looks around the fane
At ease, to which he journeyed for his vow,
And of its make soon hopes to tell again, 45
So turning on that living light my brow,
I wandered with mine eyes from place to place,
Now up, now down, and round and round it now.
And I saw many a love-persuading face,
Enriched by others' light and smiles their own, 50
And haviors deckt with every nobler grace.
The general form of Paradise was shown
Already by my glances unconfined,
Not yet sojourning in one part alone.
And with rekindled zeal I turned to find 55
My lady, that I might enquire, and she
Resolve me that, which poised in doubt my mind.

One thing I sought, another encountered me ;

I lookt for Beatris, and an ancient man
I saw — clad like the glorious companie. 60

His eyes and cheeks a radiance overran

Of gentle joy, and tender was his air,
Like as in loving father we may scan.

And “where is she ?” I spoke out unaware ;

He answered, “From my place hath Beatris 65
Incited me to terminate thy care.

And the third circle if thou seek from this

First order, wilt behold her, where she stays
On throne, that equalled with her merits is.”

Nought did I answer, but my face upraise, 70

And I beheld her, where herself she crowned,
Reflecting from her front the eternal rays.

From regions, wherein thunders highest sound,

So far removed is never mortal eye,
That ventures below sea the deepest ground, 75

As there removed from Beatris was I ;

But nought it hindered, since her feature sped
Towards me, thro’ where no mingled mediums lie.

“ O Lady, that of all my hopes art head,
And hast endured, for my spirit's aid, 80
On Hell to leave the traces of thy tread —
For all the glorious things I have surveyed,
It is thy power and thy benignity,
That have the grace and strength to me conveyed.
From Slavery hast thou drawn me to be free 85
By every method, and by all endeavor,
That instrumental to thy aim could be.
Continue over me thy bounties ever,
That so my soul, whom thou hast rendered sane,
To thee well-pleasing from my flesh may sever.” 90
So prayed I, and she from the far domain,
Wherein she sat, lookt on me, beaming thither,
Then toward the Fount of Ages turned again.
That holy Elder said, “ That altogether
Thou mayst complete thy pilgrimage, as prayer 95
And hallowed love for this have sent me hither,
Glance over with thine eyes this garden rare ;
For seeing that will keener make thy view,
That through the rays of God to mount mayst bear.

And eke the Queen of Heaven, for whom all through 100

I burn with love, will grant us every claim ;
For am not I her Bernard good and true."

As one, that haply from Croatia came

To see our Veronica, and no whit
Could be contented with its olden fame, 105
Who in his heart saith, when they're showing it,

"O Jesu Christ, O Very Lord God mine,
Does truly this thy feature counterfeit?"

So felt I, marveling at the zeal benign

Of him, who tasted even here below 110
In contemplation of that peace divine.

"O Child of Grace, but never canst thou know,"

Thus he bespoke me, "our estate of weal,
If thine eye tarries on the last grade low.

But scan the circles even till thou feel 115

The appearance and enthronement of the Queen,
To whom this empire is devout and leal."

I raised my eyes, and as at morn is seen

The horizon's eastern quarter to excell
In brightness that, where sinks the sun at e'en, 120

Thus climbing, so to say, to mount from dell,

I saw one portion of the marge extreme,
From which that front in brightness elsewhere fell
Far short, and as where you expect the team,

That Phaethon guided ill, the light may flame 125
More warm, and this and that way faintlier gleam,
So likewise that pacific Auriflame

Glowed in the midmost, and toward every part
With like gradation paled away its flame.

And at this midmost with their wings apart 130

I saw more than a thousand Angels gay,
All differing in their brightness and their art.

I saw upon their songs and on their play

Smiles beaming from a beauty, that with pleasure
Lit up the saints' eyes round her every way. 135

And if I had expressions in like measure

With my conceptions, still I durst not let
Them touch the least of her sweet glories' treasure.

St. Bernard, when he saw mine eyes were set

Firm and intent on that warm radiation, 140
Turned his on her so loving, that he yet
Made mine more eager in their contemplation.

CANTO XXXII.

ENGAGED with his Delight, that studious man

Was nothing loth the functions to invest
Of teacher, and these hallowed words began.

“The wound, that was by Mary balmed and drest,

That woman, sitting loveliest at her feet, 5
Is she, that laid it open and imprest.

And nearest, in the third row, is the seat

Of Rachel, and with her to make a pair
Is Beatris, even as thine eyes they meet.

Sarai, Rebecca, Judith, next are there, 10

And the third womb before that Menestrel,
Who, grieving for his fault, said ‘O God spare.’
So they from petal down to petal dwell

In their gradations, as adown the rows
Descending, one by one their names I tell. 15

And these beneath the seventh degree, as those
Above, are women of the Hebrews all,
Parting the curls and tresses of the rose.
For as the aspect of their faith did fall
To Christward, even so through all the tiers 20
They are divided at this boundary-wall.
On this side, where mature the flower appears
With all her petals blown, are seated they
Who looked for Christ to come in after years.
And yonder side, where intervals inlay 25
The semicircles, do believers own,
Who on Christ, having come, their eyes did lay.
And as from our part by the glorious throne
Of the Celestial Queen, and by the rest
Beneath it, the grand limit is made known, 30
So that of great John makes it manifest
Out there, who, saintly still, the desert bore,
The Death, and then two years amid the unblest.
And under him partitioning, as before,
Are Francis, Austin, Benedict in a line 35
Descending, as thou seest, and many more.

Now meditate the high Providence divine ;

For the two aspects of the Faith, to fit

This garden out, shall evenly combine.

And from the seats, in midway rank, that knit 40

These double files, and downwards, thou wilt find

That none do for their own deserving sit,

But for another's under terms assigned ;

For every one of these hath been set free,

Ere truly self-determined was the mind. 45

This by the childish features wilt thou see,

If well thou scan them, and if well thou list,

Wilt hear it by the childlike symphony.

Now dost thou doubt, and doubting thou art whist,

But I'll this hard knot looser for thee make, 50

Which thy fine-searching cogitations twist.

In this our liberal kingdom nought can take

Its place by chance ; for hither no such thing

Comes—more than thirst, and hunger, and heart-ache ;

For laws eternal to the stablishing 55

Of all thou viewest operate, so that right

Is every finger fitted with its ring.

And therefore these, who took such hasty flight,
 Into the true life not without a cause
Are entered so, these more, and those less bright. 60
That Good, who maketh all this realm to pause
 In so much love, and in delight so great,
That nought beyond the daring'st wishes draws,
The souls in his glad presence doth create
 And dower with grace, to differ each from each, 65
And here suffice it, that the fact I state.
And this to you doth Holy Scripture teach,
 Full plainly and expressly, by those two
Twin babes, whom Anger in the womb could reach.
And after such grace therefore — by the hue, 70
 I tell thee, of its hair — the high God's sheen
Entwines their temples in proportions due.
So not regarding what their works have been,
 They here in different orders are comprised,
Differing but as their insight erst was keen. 75
For in the world's first ages it sufficed
 For their salvation, if with Innocence
They kept the Truth, their fathers recognized.

But when that early period was gone hence,

The males were bound, their members innocent 80
By circumcising, to win confidence.

But since the times of healing have been sent,

Without the perfect baptism into Christ,
Such Innocence down yonder must be pent.

Now look we on the face, that unto Christ 85

Is likest; for there's nought can give thee power,
Except her splendor, to set thine eyes on Christ."

On Her I saw such plenteousness to shower

Of joyance, carried by each holy Being
Created to wave wings in that high bower, 90
That all, which I had heretofore been seeing,

Had never in such marvel me suspended,
Nor had appeared with God so well agreeing.

Thereat the Love, who first had here descended,

Chanting "O Mary Queen, fulfilled with grace," 95
His level wings in front of her extended.

The blissful Court from all surrounding place

To the Canticle divine its answer made,
Such as to render sunnier every face,

“O Sacred Sire, who deignest for mine aid 100

Thus low to come down, leaving the sweet rest,
In which thy heritage eterne is laid,

Who is the Angel, that so blithe and blest

Is gazing full in th’ eyes upon our Queen,
And seems all fire, with so much love possest?” 105
Thus from the teaching I came back to glean

Of him, that beautiful by Mary grew,
As the Sun makes the Star of Morning sheen.
And he replied, “All cheer and gladness too,

That can with Soul or Angel make abode, 110
Abides on him, and this we love to view.

For he it is, brought down the palm bestowed

On Mary, at the time God’s very Son
Was willing to assume our mortal load.

But come now, let thine eyes attendant run 115

Behind my words, and mark the nobles great
Of our just, loyal empire every one.

Yon twain, that sit in blissfullest estate,

Since with Augusta’s nearness chiefly graced,
As the two roots unto this rose I rate. 120

See, who beside her on the left is placed :

It is that Father, by whose daring bite
Mankind so many a bitter thing doth taste.

That Holy Church's Father on the right 124

Thou seest, who from our Lord the keys received,
Which He took earthward, of this flower's delight.
And there is he, that ere he died, perceived

The times of travail of that lovely Bride,
Who by the Lance and Nails had been achieved,
By this One sitting, and by the other's side 130

That leader, under whom was fed on manna
The folk ungrateful, fickle, hard to guide.
Right opposite to Peter sitteth Anna,

Who doth her daughter with such gladness eye,
That nought she looks away to sing Hosanna. 135
And the grand parent is confronted by

Lucia, by her who called thy Lady down,
When to perdition thou didst lower thine eye.
But since the time is lapsing of thy swoon,

Here must we finish, like a seamstress wise 140
Who, as the stuff permits her, makes the gown.

And set we on the all-first Love our eyes ;

That, looking towards Him, thou mayst pierce within
His Glory's blaze, as far as in thee lies.

Of a truth, and no perhaps, thou drawest-in 145

Thy wings at this point, fearing thou shouldst grow
Presumptuous ; but there's grace by prayer to win,
Yea, grace from her who succors can bestow ;

Attend me with thy feelings ; and where'er
My words bid, let thy heart unswerving go." 150
And therewith he began this holy prayer.

CANTO XXXIII.

“ THOU Maid and Mother, Daughter of thy Sonne,*
Thou humble and high above created thing,
Fixt bourne to which counsails eternal ronne,
Thou art that She, who didst our Nature bring
So high, that its Creator did not spurn 5
To grow the work of his own fashioning.
Within thy womb began afresh to burn
That Love, whereof the ardency could raise
This flower, unfolded unto peace eterne.
Thou here art unto us the noonday blaze 10
Of Charity, and thou to mortal sight
Art the most living Well of hope that plays.

* From Chaucer's "Canterbury Tales, Second Nonne's Prologue."

Thou, Lady, art so great, and hast such might,
That whoso would have grace, and asks not thee,
His wish adventures on a wingless flight. 15
Not him alone, who seeks thy clemency,
Thou succorest, but oftentimes in sooth
Outrunnest prayer with liberality.
In thee is mercy, and in thee is ruth,
In thee magnificence, thou dost enfold 20
Of every creature's excellence the truth.
This mortal now, who from the neathmost hold
Aloft hath seen the Universe reveal
Her spiritual natures manifold,
Beseecheth of thy grace that he may feel 25
The virtue in him, to exalt his eyes
Yet farther toward the yondermost of weal
And I, who never burned in equal guise
For mine own seeing, as for his dear sake,
Add all my prayers, and pray they may suffice ; 30
That so thy prayer may from his vision take
All clouds, attaching to the mortal span,
Till the Supreme of Bliss apparent make

Himself, and O thou Queen, whose Will is Can,
I farther pray thee, holy to maintain, 35
After that sight, the affections of the Man ;
May thy regard his mortal bents refrain, —
Look with what blest ones Beatris yfere
Spreads hands to thee, his asking to obtain.”
The eyes that God doth love, and doth revere, 40
Fixed on the Speaker, made her well to seem
As one, that pious orison holdeth dear.
Then back they bent upon the Light Supreme,
In which that e'er another can look higher
With creature's power we never must esteem. 45
And I, who toward the goal, where all aspire,
Perceived myself approaching, as was good,
Slaked in my heart the fervor of desire.
Bernard was smiling, beckoning that I should
Look upward, but I had begun to do 50
Of mine own self already as he would.
For gathering greater limpidness, my view
Was entering deep and deeper in the ray
Of that high Light, which in itself is true.

My seeing now was more than words can say, 55
For tongue of man must yield to such a sight,
And memory under such a brunt give way.
As one, who sees a dream, and after light
Abides the imprinted passion, but the form
Of all beside is lost and faded quite ; 60
So is't with me, for nearly all outworn
Is now my Vision, but within my heart
The sweetness trickles yet, which thence was born ;
So the snow's traces, where the sunbeams dart,
Evanish, so the Sibyl's prophecy 65
Did on the light leaves in the winds depart.
O Light Superne, which of thyself so high
Above the ranges of our thoughts art hung,
Of that thou didst appear again supply
My mind some particle, and grant my tongue 70
Such force, that of thy glories it may leave
One spark, the far posterities among.
For if but my remembrance aught retrieve,
And aught be voiced and bruited in my lay,
Men of thy triumph shall the more conceive. 75

I judge, the intenseness of the living ray

Which I beheld, would have bedimmed my sense,
If but mine eyebeam had been turned away.

And I remember, I was rendered hence

The bolder, that my vision I could bear 80
To mingle with the bourneless excellence.

O grace supernal, through which I could dare

To fix my aspect on the Light eterne
So full, that I consumed my vision there.

In its profundity 'gan I discern 85

By love bound up together in one whole,
All that which through the Universe doth churn,
Substaunce, and accident, and all their rôle,

Conflated, as it were, in such a mode,
That I but saw one very light and sole. 90

The figure universall of this node

Methinks I saw, and thus by having said,
I feel more joyaunce in me make abode.

One stound hath more oblivion on me laid

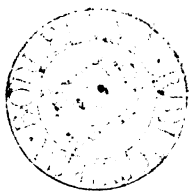
Than ages twenty five on th' enterprise, 95
Whence Neptune marvelled under Argo's shade.

So far my mind, out-lancht across mine eyes,
Was gazing fixed, unmoveable, intent,
And farther still was fired to scrutinize.
Before this Light we grow of such a bent, 100
That thence to turn for any new aspect,
'Tis never possible we should consent,
That good, which is the scope of intellect,
Being all concenter'd here, and what among
Things else is perfect, being here defect. 105
Henceforth in utterance shall I be strong
For even that which I recall no more
Than child, who still at nipple batheth tongue ;
Not but that one Appearance only bore
This living Light, the object of my view, 110
Which is for ever that it was of yore ;
But as upon my sight more vigor grew
In gazing on a single semblant, hence
My changing made the constant object new.
In the profound and clearest permanence 115
Of this high light, methought, three orbs did show
Themselves, of colors three and one expanse.

And one i' th' next, as rainbow by rainbow,
 Appeared reflected, and the third a flame,
That hence and hither evenly should blow. 120
O how short-coming is my speech and tame
 To my conception, which to that descried
Is such, as only poor I cannot name.
O Light Supreme, which dost in Self abide,
 And understanding, understood alone 125
By self, thy Self dost love and dost arride,
That Circle, which appeared in thee grown
 As light from light reflected, having been
A little traversed by mine eyes, anon
Within itself, amidst its very sheen 130
 Seemed colored with the semblance of our kind,
Which made me thither all my gaze to lean.
As some Geometer, who sets his mind
 On measuring the Circle, and no care
Nor thought, the needed principle can find, 135
So did I at this new disclosure fare ;
 I sought to learn, how could the image fill
The Circle, and be coextensive there.

But thereto was my own wing feeble still,
 Untill at length upon my soul did smite 140
A lightning flash, and therein came its will :
Now power forsook my lofty fancy's flight,
 But my desire and will, like wheels of cars
That evenly are rolled, was moved by might
Of love, which sways the sun and all the stars. 145

THE END.



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ADVERTISEMENT.

It is the intention of the Translator to complete the Work by a series of Notes, which will form a fourth volume of about the same size as the preceding, and will appear, D. V., in the summer of next year.

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